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**Brand Message Strategies and Consumer Motivations to Respond**

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**Brand Message Strategies and Consumer Motivations to Respond**

**by**

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## **Dedication**

With all my love and respect, I dedicate this dissertation to my father and mother  
and my grandmother..



# **Brand Message Strategies and Consumer Motivations to Respond**

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2018

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The overarching purpose of this dissertation is to first provide a theoretical and empirical background for research on motivation and branding strategies; a review of the literature on social media, social media marketing, and brand association is provided for context. From this, three research questions are presented. Chapter 3 describes the procedures, methodology, results and discussion briefs of two studies. Finally, Chapter 4 discusses the expected theoretical and managerial contributions of this study and directions for future research.

The primary goals of this research are to provide an exploratory analysis investigating how global brands currently use social media to share brand messages and build relationships with consumers, and the social and psychological motivational factors that lead consumers to engage with commercial brands on SNS, particularly the platform of Instagram in this early stage of social media marketing. Specifically, this study: (1) analyzes corporate account marketing messages on Instagram to understand how global brands are using Instagram for purposes of interacting with and building relationships with consumers, (2) identifies social and psychological motives that lead consumers to

engage with commercial brands on Instagram, and (3) examines the relationships between identified motives and consumer-brand relationship outcome variables. To accomplish these, two studies are conducted.

Study 1, that is a content analysis, examines the global brand Instagram accounts of the top 100 most valuable global brands, based on the brand associations by Aaker (1996). Building on the Uses and Gratification Theory (U&G), Study 2 explores the underlying process of consumers' motivations to follow a brand account by conducting a survey study of 318 Instagram brand account followers in the United States. Within the theoretical framework of U&G, this research also examines how varying degrees of consumer motivation to follow a brand account on Instagram influences consumer engagement outcomes (i.e., frequency of electronic word-of-mouth and attitude toward following brands) and outcomes related to relationship building (i.e., trust, satisfaction, intention to pass along brand's messages, and willingness to buy).

The findings of Study 1 revealed that Instagram marketers often are not using the strategies that generate the highest consumer engagement. Study 2 examined seven consumer motivations for following Instagram brand accounts. Motivations related to social interaction and brand love were the strongest motivations. Directions for future research, for example, understanding why a brand follows other account on Instagram, are provided.

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## CHAPTER 1: Introduction

- The Lokai bracelet made with water from Mount Everest and mud from the Dead Sea has become a world-famous accessory inspiring a message of positivity and commitment to helping a variety of causes like an iconic yellow Livestrong bands. Lokai's fans including athletes and celebrities from around the world post pictures of Lokai using #livelokai, and the company has raised over \$4 million for charities since the brand's launch in 2013 (Bruner 2016).
- #WeAccept hashtag campaign started with an inspirational video posted to Airbnb's feed and then continued with a series of photos featuring close up shots of people's faces on a background. Even though this campaign contrasted with Airbnb's regular content, which was usually filled with photos of beautiful homes and locations from around the world, each of the posts received a ton of positive engagement, and the video has 112,000 likes and nearly 600 comments (Chacon 2017).
- Starbucks sponsored a #RedCupContest and invited consumers to share their Red Cup designs on Instagram to spark customers' creativity. Within 8 days, Starbucks received more than 1,200 individual submissions from 13 countries (Starbucks 2016).

As the examples above illustrate, advertising practitioners are skillfully utilizing social media, especially Instagram along with Facebook and Twitter, as marketing platforms to enhance consumer-brand relationships based on a variety of communication strategies. By opening virtual doors for a rapidly growing number of consumers to interact online directly with commercial brands as well as with other peer consumers worldwide, advertising practitioners are using a variety of social media to revolutionize the marketing environment. As a result, traditional one-way mass marketing strategies are considered no longer effective in terms of their cost and outcome (Fournier and Avery 2011; Hennig-Thurau, Hofacker and Bloching 2013). As evidence of that trend, 86% of marketers currently view social media channels as critical components of their marketing

initiatives (Stelzner 2013) and have embraced branded content in social media to augment their marketing strategies and enhance consumers' brand experience (eMarketer 2013). Especially dramatic has been the high adoption rate of Instagram by global brands, a phenomenon that comes as no surprise given users' own highly personal engagement with Instagram as a tool for sharing photographs and videos with family, friends, and anonymous people all around the world. According to the 2015 State of Social Marketing Report, Instagram led the list of social media platforms being used by 85 brands of the Best 100 Interbrands, followed by Youtube, Twitter, and Facebook (Shively 2015). Equally impressive, all global brands of automobiles rely on Instagram for marketing communication (Statista 2016), while more than 96% of fashion and beauty brands have also adopted Instagram as one of their marketing tools (Statista 2016). For two years in a row, Forrester research valued Instagram as the best social media engagement tool for brands—58 times greater than Facebook and 120 times greater than Twitter. (Elliott 2014). Therefore, Instagram appears to be attracting new brand marketers as its overall usage continues to rise (eMarket 2015).

The rapid and steadily growing popularity of Instagram as a marketing platform is a global trend, not limited only to the United States. As evidence of global growth, Instagram announced that more than 80% of Instagrammers live outside the United States (2016). Instagram's global popularity among brands is based on its unique design features that have fueled phenomenal growth among social media users in spite of competition from other social media platforms, such as Pinterest and Snapchat (Mediakix Team 2016). In the world of social media, Instagram is representative of a mobile-



based social network application for photo and video-sharing based on Instagram's mission to "Capture and Share the World's Moment." By comparison, Twitter is representative of a text-based social network service that allows users to issue brief text messages limited to 140-characters. Continuing its extraordinary growth rate, in 2013 Instagram nearly doubled its number of unique visitors (Nielsen 2014). Then from 2013 to 2015, Instagram once more doubled users and active usage (Weise 2015). As a result, the Instagram community has grown to more than 500 million Instagrammers (Instagram users), more than 300 million of whom use Instagram daily (Instagram 2016). In the U.S., 28% of the total population uses Instagram (Mediakix Team 2016), and more than half of all millennials use Instagram daily (Duggan et al. 2015).

Social media is not limited to every day users. Marketers are also paying close attention to social media to support promotions, increase sales, enhance customer service, build relationships with consumers, and use social media for human resource tactics (Ashley and Tuten 2015; Sung, Kim, Kwon and Moon 2010). According to the Social Media Industry Report (Stelzner 2016), 90% of marketers believe social media is an important component of their marketing strategy, and 68% of marketers who use social media analyze their activities to track and understand the social media phenomenon as it evolves. Especially, Instagram is highlighted for marketing purposes. For example, Instagram is used by 48.8% of U.S. brands, while the adoption rate among the top 100 the Best Global Brands is 85% (Parker 2016). So far, Instagram has out-performed other social media. According to Instagram Advertiser Statistics, 80% of Instagram users follow at least one business brand (Osman 2017), and 75% take action, such as posting a

Like for a brand, leaving a comment, or visiting the brand's website after looking at an Instagram post (Parker 2016). In fact, the engagement rate for top brands on Instagram is 58 times higher than on Facebook and 120 times higher than on Twitter (Parker 2016). Based on these statistics, Business-to-Consumer (B2C) marketers are more likely to increase Instagram activities than Business-to-Business (B2B) marketers (Stelzner 2016), and 42% of marketers who invest more than 40 hours per week on social media focus more on Instagram than any other social media (Parker 2016).

Globally, in near future Instagram is expected to become the one of the marketing tools that promises to change today's marketing environment. To the best of the author's knowledge, academic research on this new Social Network Site (SNS) platform is limited compared to other SNSs, such as Facebook and Twitter. More specifically, only a few studies have examined usage of Instagram, and they have focused on only a few industry categories such as restaurants (Alper 2014; Hassan 2014; Wallis 2014; Ginsberg 2015; Salleh, Hashim, & Murphy 2015; Smith & Sanderson 2015; Ting et al. 2015). Therefore, the primary objectives of this dissertation research are to provide an exploratory analysis investigating how global brands currently use social media to share brand messages and build relationships with consumers and to understand the social and psychological motivational factors that lead consumers to engage with commercial brands on SNS, especially the platform of Instagram in this early stage of social media marketing. Specifically, the goals of this study are as follows: (1) to analyze corporate account marketing messages on Instagram to understand how global brands are using Instagram for purposes of interacting with and building relationships with consumers, (2) to identify

social and psychological motives that lead consumers to engage with commercial brands on Instagram, and (3) to examine the relationships between identified motives and consumer-brand relationship outcome variables. To that end, two studies are conducted. Study 1, which is a content analysis, examines the global brand Instagram accounts of the top 100 most valuable global brands in 2015, based on the brand associations by Aaker (1996). Building on the Uses and Gratification Theory (U&G) (Blumler 1979; Palmgreen & Rayburn 1979), Study 2 explores the underlying process of consumers' motivations to follow a brand account by conducting a survey study of 318 Instagram brand account followers in the United States. Within the theoretical framework of U&G, this research also examines how varying degrees of consumer motivation to follow a brand account on Instagram influence consumer engagement outcomes (i.e., frequency of electronic word-of-mouth and attitude toward following brands) and outcomes related to relationship building (i.e., trust, satisfaction, intention to pass along brand's messages, and willingness to buy).

To provide a theoretical and empirical background for this research, Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature on social media, social media marketing, and brand association. The Theory of Uses and Gratification is used to explicate the motivating role for users to follow and interact with a brand account on social media. Three research questions are presented based on the theoretical framework. Chapter 3 describes the procedures, method, results and discussion of two studies. Finally, Chapter 4 discusses the expected theoretical and managerial contributions of this study and directions for future research.

## **CHAPTER 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Background**

In this chapter, prior research on social media is reviewed in order to present what is already known about individuals' as well as marketers' use of social media in general and Instagram in particular. In addition, this chapter provides a review of the concepts and theories that provide the theoretical underpinnings of this research—brand associations (e.g., Aaker 1991, 1996; Keller 1993) and Uses and Gratification theory (e.g., Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch 1974; Blumler 1979). On the basis of prior research and the theoretical background, the questions guiding this research are presented.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media is defined as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content (UGC) (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). That is, social media allow all users to continuously modify and upgrade content. Based on this definition, social media encompass a broad array of services that include blogs (e.g., Tumblr, blogspot), collaborative sites (e.g., Wikipedia), commerce communities (e.g., Amazon.com), and social bookmarking sites (e.g., Del.icio.us) in addition to virtual worlds (i.e., virtual game worlds, virtual social worlds) (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010; Mangold and Faulstich 2009). Even though social media are comprised of much more than social network sites (SNSs), the term social media is commonly used interchangeably with SNS. According to Boyd and Ellison (2008, p 211), a SNS is defined as “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile

within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (Boyd and Ellison 2008; Ellison 2007). Profiles are unique pages where an individual can “type oneself into being” (Boyd and Ellison 2008; Sunden 2003, p. 3). Profiles, the first process that users engage in after deciding to join a SNS, include a series of informational steps giving other users a general idea of who the descriptor is. After uploading his or her profile on a SNS, the user is encouraged to provide content to the site in the form of text updates, photos, videos, games, and so on (Weman 2011). Even though a SNS enables a user to articulate information about various topics and make the user’s social networks visible to others, SNSs are employed not only for making new friends or connecting with strangers; rather social media are used mostly to interact with individuals who are already part of established networks.

Since the 1990s when many SNSs were created, people’s lives have been dramatically revolutionized in many different ways. For example, people have started to interact with others by advocating for public policies and building social networks based on a web-of-contacts models, such as Six Degrees, BlackPlanet, Asian Avenue, and MoveOn (Edosomwan and et al. 2011). In addition, subsequent to the creation of blogging services such as Blogger and Epinions, consumers are able to share reviews of products or services with large groups of other people. For a while, software applications such as ThirdVoice and Napster allowed peer-to peer file sharing that was later terminated as a violation of copyright law (Ritholz 2010).

In the early 2000s, social media became extremely popular with the introduction of Facebook, which was launched in February 2004. Founded by Mark Zuckerberg and others, Facebook was initially restricted to use by Harvard students only (Edosomwan and et al. 2011). However, soon after usage restrictions were lifted to include everyone 13 years of age and older, the popularity of Facebook skyrocketed, and it became the most prominent social network site worldwide with more than 1.23 billion daily active users as of September 2016. That increase represented a growth rate of 18% year over year (Facebook 2017). Upon joining Facebook, individuals begin by creating a personal profile and connect with other users as friends. By becoming a friend with other users on the website, individuals are able to exchange messages, such as automatic notifications, photos, and comments from others when they update their profiles (Parr 2010; Kwon and Sung 2011). Moreover, Facebook users may join common interest user groups, organized by workplace, school, college, or other characteristics. Thus, Facebook has quickly become a huge virtual place to interact not only with other individuals but also with groups.

Twitter is another example of a social network that has acquired an astronomical number of users. Within a decade of its launching in 2006, Twitter reported 313 million monthly active users as of June 2016 (Twitter 2017). Despite Facebook's popularity, Twitter's has experienced its own phenomenal growth because it offers a different type of social media. Instead of making friends with other users, as happens on Facebook, Twitter users tend to share observations on their surroundings, information about an event or their opinions regarding certain topics. As a result, Twitter users focus on

information they want to send and receive rather than on other users (Parr 2010; Kwon and Sung 2011; Pew Research Center 2011). Another feature of Twitter is its micro blogging aspect that restricts Twitter messages to only 140 characters, assuring that Tweets are succinct, easy to read, and shared widely.

Social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, are popular for other reasons, as well. Importantly, most Internet users are able to access SNSs. According to a Global Digital Report 2018, the number of worldwide social media users reached 3.2 billion, closely following the number of mobile phone users, which reached 5.14 billion (2018). The world population numbered 7.6 billion as of June 10, 2018, and social media users reached approximately 42.1% and mobile phone users 67.63%, respectively. The growing availability of high-speed Internet that extends to mobile phone access magnified the popularity of SNSs. The uniqueness of the interconnectivity between the Internet and mobile phones allows users to autonomously seek specific information they might not be available elsewhere and to communicate with others anytime and anyplace (Bucher 2002).

In the early years of social media, SNSs were used mainly for personal tasks such as creating profiles, listing friends, and surfing friends' lists, enabling users to connect with and send messages to others (e.g., SixDegrees) (Boyd and Ellison 2008). Users identified others as Friends, allowing them to follow their journals and manage privacy settings (e.g., LiveJournal, Cyworld, etc.) (Boyd and Ellison 2008; Kim & Yun 2007). In addition, SNSs helped users connect based on target-specific demographics or shared interests (e.g., Couchsurfing connects travelers). For example, LinkedIn—the most

popular social platform for professional networking with more than 467 million users— focuses on business professionals (Fontein 2017). Facebook, which has 2.07 billion active users monthly (Newberry 2018), was originally designed in 2004 to support Harvard users who were required to have Harvard-associated email addresses in order to join Facebook (Cassidy 2006; Boyd and Ellison 2008). A year later, beginning in late 2005, Facebook expanded its network to include anyone who had an appropriate .com address. Subsequently, individuals who wish to create their own social media sites can do so on variety of platforms.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA MAREKTING**

The growth of social media has induced many brands and companies to invest time and money in creating, purchasing, promoting and advertising SNSs (Boyd and Ellison 2008). Scholars from disparate fields have examined SNSs in order to understand the practices, implications, culture, and meaning of the sites as well as users' engagement with them.

Social media have competed strongly against the traditional media of print, radio, and television as vehicles of mass communication and have also changed the media and marketing environment. Because of the growing importance of the Internet and active consumers who engage in online communities, social media as cultural influences have become both ubiquitous and obtrusive (Kozinets 2002). By providing new opportunities for consumer interaction, SNSs have opened new possibilities for marketing managers to get close to consumers. Marketing research seeks to understand and identify consumers'



desires and tastes while relevant systems of products and services are employed to influence the decision-making of consumers and consumer groups. Numerous studies have found that, in turn, consumers who engage on social media seek to influence and inform other community members about brands and products (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001).

This changed media environment has given rise to companies' pursuit of social media marketing opportunities that utilize interconnected technologies, channels, and software. Social media marketing facilitates the creation, communication, delivery, and exchange of offerings that have value for an organization's stakeholders. As newer and newer social media marketing techniques that are designed to engage consumers continue to spring up, Tuten and Solomon have suggested the addition of *Participation* as the 5<sup>th</sup> P of the Marketing 4Ps (i.e., Product, Place, Price, Promotion) (2014).

Once companies decide what media they prefer, brand managers start to engage with consumers on social media in various ways such as promoting products, providing entertainment, creating contests, co-designing products, and seeking feedback (Mull & Lee 2014). SNSs such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram provide networks with "space" where users can set up virtual webpages by creating a profile, establishing a network of social contacts, and reaching out to new social connections (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe 2007). Importantly, SNSs allow consumers to communicate directly with other consumers by sharing information about products, brands, and services through electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), while consumers rely on friends and family, who are physically close to share their feedback and recommended products in offline contexts (Libai et al.

2010). Because eWOM is communicated electronically, unrestrained by time and geographical distance, it has a greater influence on other consumers' purchasing decisions, attitude constructs, and product assessment than traditional marketing methods (Mull & Lee 2014).

Various methods of social media marketing have achieved great success. A striking example was Volvo's "The Greatest Interception Ever," a commercial that aired in 2015 in conjunction with the Super Bowl game. In the U.S. advertising market, TV commercials for the annual Super Bowl are coveted marketing opportunities that rank among the most expensive in the world; in the U.S., Super Bowl Day is most expensive advertising day of the entire year. Therefore, many brands want to air their advertisements during the Super Bowl period but are constrained due to the high cost. To maximize its competitive advantage by employing characteristics available via social media, Volvo came up with a new strategy that gave Super Bowl fans a chance to win a new Volvo if they would tweet its hashtag, #VolvoContest, when other car brands' Super Bowl commercials were being telecast (O'Leary 2015). The contest incentive effectively diverted viewers' attention away from competing car commercials when they focused on tweeting the Volvo hashtag. As a result, about 2,000 #VolvoContest tweets per minute were shared during the Super Bowl period every time a commercial for another car manufacturer was aired (Helin 2016). As a result, Volvo scored US \$200 million in earned media impressions and saw a 70% sales increase for its newest model during the month immediately following the Super Bowl game (Helin 2016). Not surprisingly, Volvo's strategy was praised as "the greatest interception ever" for its cleverness in using

Twitter not only to energize viewers to participate in their campaign but also to do so without spending huge amounts on their Super Bowl ads. In contrast, other major car brands, such as Mercedes-Benz, Lexus, Kia, Nissan, and Toyota, together spent approximately US \$60 million combined on TV commercials during the 2015 Super Bowl (Helin 2016).

Another highly successful example of SNSs used for advertising purposes was Spotify's New Year's resolution campaign in 2017 that employed social media data from user playlists and streaming habits that went viral on SNSs. Based on a storytelling format, Spotify printed out data points and pasted them up on billboards around the country. By literally taking Spotify's digital brand to the streets, followers of its digital community were able to feel connected in a very physical way and, in particular, as they travelled down streets in their own towns. Thus, "Spotify's 2018 Goals Campaign" was able to bridge the gap between online and digital spaces giving their worldwide brand a much more local feel. Further, because many social media users posted their own online photographs of the billboards on SNSs, the Spotify playlists were shared and re-shared thousands and thousands of times (Gallegos 2018).

## **INSTAGRAM**

Instagram is unique compared to other social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, in that Instagram is highly visual in nature. Like the saying "seeing is believing," a picture can be worth a thousand words. Especially for marketing purposes, the delivery

of visual content that spotlights images of products and services can greatly enhance the likelihood of consumer conversions. In the context of both physical and online environments, individual consumer purchasing decision-making processes rely fundamentally on visual impressions (Jia, Shiv, and Rao 2014). Moreover, the ability of brands to build their identities and self-reflective image power depends largely on images (McNely 2012). Because of its high level of effectiveness, Instagram, as a marketing platform is used not only to promote commercial products and services but also to influence political campaigns (Karin and Bernhardt 2017).

Ultimately, organizations use Instagram to interact with and engage end-users in ways that motivate them to interact directly with the company or politician as well as to influence one another. On Instagram, contests are among the most used marketing strategies with Starbucks #RedCupContest as described in the Introduction being an excellent example of boosting consumer engagement. Another highly effective campaign was launched by GoPro, an American technology company that manufactures action cameras and develops its own mobile apps and video-editing software. Because of its shrewd ability to interact with customers based on a combination of views, shares, comments and overall engagement, GoPro was listed as one of the “Top 10 Best Brand Channels on YouTube” (Sloane 2014). Instagram’s unique characteristics make it compatible with GoPro as evidenced by an official GoPro Instagram account that in 2016 had more than 4,300 posts and 13.9 million followers. GoPro’s highly successful campaign resulted from its partnership with an influencer who is popular with the target market. The influencer was asked to make video with holiday season themes and to

organize a caption-writing contest. Instagram users participated in that contest, which was extremely popular, because the winning caption, which was awarded a prize from GoPro, was the one that received the highest number of likes (Pacis 2017). In other words, online users competed to write the “most popular caption.”

A Canadian-based athletic clothing retailer, RYU Apparel, ran a marketing campaign through its Instagram account called “WhatsInYourBag” that was also highly successful. They engaged followers by asking them to share a picture with the hashtag #WhatsInYourBag showing the inside of their gym bags with the chance to win a prize package from RYU. Not only was the contest an effective way to engage the target audiences and spread the word about RYU brand, but also the contest created a phenomenon after which hashtags became a marketing trend (Pacis 2018). Considering that individuals tend to express themselves through their market choices, such as personal possessions or favorite brands (Belk 1988; Fournier 1998), the RYU campaign promoted not only the brand of a relatively small retailer but also highlighted the individuality of consumers.

Taking selfies that individuals post on Instagram and other SNSs has become another popular way for consumers to utilize digital environments (Belk 2013; Schroeder 2013). Likewise, selfies are now broadly used on Instagram as a commercial marketing strategy. Oxford Dictionary defines a selfie as “a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically taken with a smartphone or webcam and shared via social media.” Even though putting a dollar amount on a selfie is an inexact science, the value of selfie marketing is clearly demonstrated by Ellen’s [Degeneres] Oscar Selfie, which was taken

with a lot of A-List celebrities posing in front of a Samsung Galaxy Note 3. According to NBC News, 43 million people saw the moment of Ellen's Selfie during the Oscar Award broadcast, while the picture itself was viewed on Twitter by 37 million people (2014).

In addition to celebrity selfie marketing campaigns, marketers also bring together their customers for selfie endorsements. For example, to promote the release of new Solo 2 headphones, Apple subsidiary Beats Electronics encouraged both consumers and celebrities to post selfie videos using the social media hashtags #SoloSelfie and #BeatsByDre (Dilger 2014). Another company, Reebok, asked consumers on Instagram to post workout selfies to capture "less plastic and more human" expressions with the hashtag #breakyourselfie, and Lancome launched its #bareselfie campaign to advocate healthy skin and natural beauty (Carnoy 2014). The strategy of companies turning to their own customers for selfie marketing campaign endorsements is another highly effective way for marketers to reach consumers, especially millennials. Several studies have found that young consumers trust and accept marketing information from their closest friends and company websites more than from advertising and sales messages (The McCarthy Group 2014; Chen 2018).

To date, research on Instagram as a marketing tool has focused on the use of Instagram in a narrow context—e.g., a single industry such as food, a limited group such as small and medium sized companies, or a particular social group such as women. For example, one research study that investigated the use of Instagram focused only on Malaysia's top ten restaurant brands (Salleh, Hashim, & Murphy 2015), and a couple of studies focused on use of Instagram and social media within the fashion industries (Park,

Giampaglia, & Ferrara 2016; Waninger 2015; Cukul 2015). In contrast, little information is available on how Instagram functions as a general marketing platform.

## **BRAND ASSOCIATION**

Virtual brand communities—whether brand managed or consumer created—can be characterized by the same dimensions identified by earlier marketing scholars studying brands. For example, Aaker (1991) classified a brand's major assets into five categories: brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, brand association, and brand proprietary. Among those five brand assets, brand association is the essential asset for building strong brand equity because the network of brand associations in a consumer's memory supports better understanding of brand equity (Checng-Hsui Chen 2001). Krishnan also previously asserted that brands with high equity have a greater number of associations and more linked positive associations than brands with low equity (1996).

Consumers associate a brand not only with its attributes, features, or logo but also with a brand endorser or usage situation of the brand, and these associated values are naturally regarded as a network (Anderson 1983). Brand association is defined as “the other informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory and contained in the meaning of the brand for consumers” (Keller 1993 p. 3). Therefore, those associations are typically used for identifying a brand's unique value to consumers and establishing a brand's image, which eventually enables success in the marketplace by strengthening the brand's equity (Anderson 1983; Aaker 1996). The term, *brand image* was the first

identified in the marketing literature by Gardner and Levy (1955), which they argued that the quality of the product is not the only thing considered when consumers make decisions. Brand image is defined as “perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in memory” (Keller 1993, p. 3). Perceptions include consumers’ cognition or emotional insights attached to specific brands (Dobni and Zinkhan 1990). Brand image demands the identification of a network of strong, unique, and favorable brand associations because consumers store brand information in the form of an associative network (Anderson 1983; Chen 2001; John, Loken, Kim and Monga 2006; Schnittka, Sattler and Zenker 2012). Therefore, “brand image” is often used interchangeably with “brand association” (Biel 1992), and it is considered to guide consumers’ purchase choices (Dolich 1969) and marketers’ long-term investment in building brand associations so that brands will be success in the market (Gardner and Levy’s study 1955).

Brand associations are usually recognized as product-related associations, but Aaker expanded the concept of brand association to include organizational associations such as corporate image (1996). As such, brand associations can result from all possible images related to a corporation, its product, and users. For example, when consumers think of a brand, Apple, they recall numerous associations such as MacBook, iPhones, Apple Watch, Steve Jobs, cool, innovative, design, stylish, creative and so forth, which are the underlying values of the Apple brand and its set of associations. According to Aaker, brand associations are anything “linked” in consumers’ memory to a specific brand (Aaker 1991). Understanding the linked associations of a brand is important



because they create value for the brand and its consumers (Aaker 1996). For example, these brand associations can become a compact information chunk for customers that helps them process information or influences their interpretation of facts. In addition, some association—such as symbols, a brand’s endorsers, and experience of use—stimulate positive attitudes or feelings toward the brand. Therefore, those associations provide a distinct value to consumers and result in differentiation in the market and involve a specific reason to buy and use the brand.

Previous scholars have distinguished brand associations by how much information is summarized or incorporated in the associations (Alba and Hutchinson 1987; Chattopadhyay and Alba 1988; Johnson 1984; Keller 1993; Russo and Johnson 1980). Based on the level of information abstraction, brand associations can be classified into three major categories: attributes, benefits, and attitudes (Keller 1993). *Attributes* are descriptive features of a product or brand including product-related attributes such as the functions and non-product related attributes such as price, packaging, and users or usage imagery. *Benefits* of brand association are the personal values related to what consumers think the product or brand can do for them. *Attitudes* are consumers’ overall evaluations of a brand (Wilkie and Pessemier 1986), and therefore, often are involved in consumers’ decision-making process.

Another widely accepted approach to categorize brand associations is adopted from Aaker (1991). Aaker categorized brand associations into 11 groups: product attributes, intangibles, customer benefits, relative price, use/application, user/customer, celebrity/person, life-style/personality, product class, competitors, and

country/geographic area (1996). The category of *product attribute* is most commonly associated with a brand in consumers' mind. Based on the expectancy-value approach, the evaluation of product attributes is consistent with a consumer's products preference (Rosenberg 1956; Fisherbein 1963; Vison, Scott, and Lamont 1977). Thus, perceived product attributes affect consumers' attitudes toward the products (DeIVecchio 2001) and can directly translate into reasons to buy or not to buy (Arker 1996). The concept of *intangible attribute*, such as attributes related to technology, health, or nutrition, was first introduced by Chakrabarti, Feinman, and Fuentevilla (1982). Intangible attributes are especially important brand association for scientific and high-tech decision-making and information transfer because they represent facts that are difficult for consumer to understand and thereby reduce consumer uncertainty. Also, intangible attributes and related benefits are more challenging for others to counter than concrete attributes (Alba and Hutchinson 1987; Shaw, Giglierano and Kallis 1991). Consumers tend to use *price* as an indicator of quality (Leavitt 1954). For example, even when there were no differences in a product, relative prices had an important impact on consumers' behavior (Griffith, Connell and Smith 2015). *Use/Application* and *User/Customer* are other approaches to create associations for the brand by presenting how a product or brand can be used in what kinds of situations with what types of consumers. *Celebrity/Person* refers to the commonly accepted idea that brand endorsers create associations with the brand name that can build brand equity (Keller 1993; McCracken 1989; Till 1998). Celebrity endorsements create and maintain attention on the endorsed product or brand and generate greater recall for both the endorsed brand and the advertisement (Friedman

and Friedman 1979; Kamen, Azhari and Kragh 1975; Atkin and Block 1983; O'Mahony and Meenaghan 1997). Brand personality is the set of human characteristics associated with a brand (Aaker 1997). Since consumers tend to see a brand as a human being, a brand can also be linked with a number of very similar *personality and life-style characteristics* in consumers' memory. *Competitor* is one of the categories of brand associations that can be used as the frame of reference for a product (Arker 1996). For example, when a brand has a competitor that has firm and well-developed images in consumers' memory, the competitor can be used as a bridge to help to link the brand with consumers. Sometimes, *Country or Geographic area* can be a strong reference when it has close connections with the product or material quality (Aaker 1996).

### **Brand Associations of Global Brands on Instagram**

Perceived brand associations in a SNS's brand community can provide an excellent foundation for analyzing the corporate account marketing messages on Instagram. Brand association is the underlying value of a brand name, and it is often the set of associations – its meaning to people (Aaker 1991). Thus, “brand associations” are defined as the other informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory and contained the meaning of the brand for consumers (Keller 1993). Understanding brand equity involves identifying the network of strong, favorable, and unique brand associations in consumer memory (Keller 1993).

There are numerous ways brand associations can provide value because associations can come in all forms and often reflect characteristics of the product or aspects independent of the product itself (Chen 2001). For example, product attributes are the most used associations because they can easily and directly translate into consumers' decision making (Aaker 1991). Instagram is able to represent product attributes by showing a picture of actual product in a variety of situations or providing an image of a product being used. In addition, direct promotion and advertising on Instagram can be considered customer benefits, and intangible associations can be developed by brand messages and hashtags. Therefore, the ways in which associations create value to the firm and its customers include helping consumers to process/retrieve information, differentiating the brand, generating a reason to buy, creating positive attitudes/feelings, and providing a basis for extension (Chen 2001). Thus, understanding brand associations in a SNS's brand community is central to Study 1, which poses the following questions:

**RQ1:** How are global brands employing Instagram?

More specifically, the following sub-questions will be addressed:

**RQ1-a:** What types of (1) images and (2) information do global brands disseminate frequently on Instagram?

**RQ1-b:** To what extent do global brands engage consumers in terms of likes and comments?

**RQ1-c:** To what extent do global brands utilize relationship strategies?

**RQ1-d:** How do the types of information differ by industry category?

**RQ1-e:** To what extent do the images and messages used on Instagram trigger consumer responses (i.e., Like and Comment)?

## **USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY**

Before brand managers invest substantial resources into SNS marketing, they seek to understand why and how consumers are using a particular platform and why that platform will serve as an effective marketing strategy. The Uses and Gratifications theory (U&G) is often used to explain why and how people use certain media based on the assumption that people communicate or use technology, including SNSs, to gratify their needs and wants. The major premise of U&G deals with the assumption that motivations to use media are good predictors of an individual's media use behavior (e.g., Blumler 1979; Ruggiero 2000). Therefore, researchers rely on U&G to understand consumer motivations for using not only traditional mass media, such television, but also new media such as the Internet as well as mobile and social media (Palmgreen & Rayburn 1979; LaRose, Mastro & Eastin 2001; Stafford et al. 2004; Leung & Wie 2000; Muntinga, Moorman & Smit 2011).

U&G assumes that media users are active and goal-directed in their behavior, and thus, aware of their needs and select the appropriate media to gratify their needs (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch 1974). Previous studies that examined psychological and behavioral aspects of Internet usage motivations have demonstrated that people use SNSs mainly to maintain relationships and to satisfy professional advancement needs, whereas most people watch television for entertainment purposes (Sehldon 2008; Smock et al.

2011). For example, SNS users adopt LinkedIn to post their resumes and/or other work-related items as well as to network with professional contacts because they believe that platform helps to support their professional advancement (Smock et al. 2011).

The rapid growth of the Internet has strengthened the applicability of U&G because social media requires users to exercise a higher level of interactivity compared to traditional media (Ruggiero 2000). Four types of gratifications have been identified as being broadly applicable to all types of media: information, entertainment, personal identity, and social interaction (McQuail 1983). According to McQuail (1983), information-seeking is the principal motivation for consumers in media gratification. As a sub-group of motivations, Muntinga et al. ascertained that consumers seek information to reduce uncertainty to obtain advice and opinions, to survey their environment, and to follow events or circumstances (2011). A secondary motivation, entertainment, includes escape from current situations, relief from boredom, and relaxation (Muntinga et al. 2011; Quan-Haase & Young 2010; Hou 2011). The third main motivation is for individuals to use social media to establish and maintain their personal identity in order to strengthen their own beliefs, explore their self-concepts, establish their individual values, and gain acknowledgement among their peers (Muntinga et al. 2011). The fourth motivation is identified as social interaction and includes sociability as well as maintaining social connection such as linking up with friends, establishing friendships, seeking emotional encouragement, and fitting in with others (Muntinga et al. 2011; Quan-Haase & Young 2010).

### **Consumer Motivations for Following Brands on Instagram**

Several U&G studies have examined the motivational dimensions of social media; however, to date, the current study is the first to examine the motivations that prompt consumers to engage with photo-sharing social media sites, in particular, Instagram. Considering that each type of media is assumed to offer its own distinct uses and gratifications that match users' needs and wants, it is valuable to understand what motivates consumers to follow postings on Instagram. In addition, it is important to investigate the relationships between consumer motivations and important involvement related consumer outcomes such as electronic word of mouth (eWOM), attitude toward the brand, brand trust, brand satisfaction, intention to pass along a brand's postings, and willingness to buy the brand. As such, the following two additional research questions will be examined.

**RQ2:** What are the motivations for that lead consumers to participate in virtual brand communities on Instagram?

**RQ3:** How are consumer motivations related to consumer outcomes?

## **CHAPTER 3: Study One and Study Two**

The purpose of Chapter 3 is to present in detail the research methodologies and findings for each study. A summary of each study will be provided, and the findings will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

### **OVERVIEW**

The questions raised in this research examine in two studies how global brands are using Instagram and the motivations that prompt users to participate in online communities on Instagram. Study 1 analyzes corporate account marketing messages posted on Instagram in an effort to understand how global brands use Instagram to interact and build relationships with consumers (RQ1). Content analysis was employed to examine systematically the content of brand postings of 33 brands selected from the 2015 Best Global Brands. Two trained coders analyzed a total of 660 messages from the selected brands.

For the purpose of extending the implications of findings of Study 1, Study 2 was conducted to identify consumers' social and psychological motivations to engage with brand accounts on Instagram (RQ2). Study 2 also examined relationships between identified motivations and brand account involvement outcomes (RQ3), including frequency of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), attitude toward the brand, brand trust, brand satisfaction, likelihood of eWOM, and intention to buy.



## **STUDY 1: CONTENT ANALYSIS OF BRAND MESSAGES ON INSTAGRAM**

Using brands from the 2015 Best 100 Global Brands provided by Interbrand, a content analysis was conducted with the crosstab as the unit of analysis. Content analysis is an unobtrusive and nonreactive method commonly used by social scientists and applied to all types of media content (Krippendorff, 2004). The Best 100 Global Brands provided by Interbrand is frequently used as a source for analyzing global brands' messages.

### **Sampling**

To collect global brands' messages, the official Instagram account was visited. Many of the websites contain links to their official Social Networking Sites (SNS) including, for example, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc. For brand websites with a link to Instagram, the linked account was used, and if no link was provided, the Instagram account was identified by looking for the brand name on a search box provided by Instagram. If multiple accounts using the brand name were listed on Instagram, the account that was clearly identified as the company's official Instagram or U.S. account was selected. As a result, among 100 Global Brands selected, 87 Instagram accounts were considered. To assure a wide range of brand selection, the top two brands were selected from each of the 17 sectors provided by Interbrand. The 17 categories are: Alcohol; Apparel; Automotive; Beverages; Business Services; Diversified; Electronics; Energy; FMCG (Fast-Moving Consumer Goods); Financial Services; Luxury; Media; Restaurants; Retail; Sporting Goods; Technology; and Transportation. Prior to collecting posts from the selected brands on Instagram, active accounts were identified using the

following criteria: (1) those created at least 6 months before the sampling process began, and (2) those with more than 200 photographs. This method yielded 33 brands since only one brand was listed in the energy sector (see Table 3.1 for detailed information).

Table 3.1: Two Top Brands From Seventeen Industry Sectors by Interbrand

Industry Sector	Brand 1	Brand 2
Alcohol	Budweiser	Jack Daniel's
Apparel	H&M	ZARA
Automotive	Toyota	BMW
Beverages	Coca-Cola	Pepsi
Business Services	IBM	Accenture
Diversified	GE	3M
Electronics	Canon	Phillips
Energy	Shell	-
FMCG	Kellog's	L'oreal
Financial Services	American Express	citi
Luxury	Louis Vuitton	Hermes
Media	Disney	Thomson Reuters
Restaurants	McDonald's	Starbucks
Retail	Amazon	IKEA
Sporting Goods	Nike	adidas
Technology	Google	Microsoft
Transportation	UPS	FedEx

The date of April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016, was selected as the cut-off date; working backward from that date, 20 postings from the Instagram account for each brand were randomly (i.e., every 5<sup>th</sup> posting) selected. Altogether, a total of 660 postings were analyzed.

The profile section for each brand was collected separately from its Instagram postings. Photographs, captions, and hashtag(s) were each analyzed separately using separate schemes and analyses. The reason for analyzing each element separately is because the attributes are often not related. As a result, if the elements had been coded together, that would have incorrectly assumed an automatic relatedness. For example, a witty caption might have nothing to do with the action in the photograph. While the captions may refer to the photograph or the action in the photograph, in most instances, the captions have nothing to do with the photographs. Therefore, by examining each element separately, full and independent analysis for each element was possible. Any video, graphic, or text/meme was discarded from the analysis. A total of 660 photographs were analyzed.

### **Coding Scheme**

Randomly selected postings were coded at two levels: brand and posting levels. Brand level coding covered the first posting date, number of posts, number of followers, brand name, profile picture, and bio, while the posting level was comprised of photos (e.g., background image, contents, and components of the image), caption (e.g., imperative verb form, purpose of caption, relationship-maintenance strategies, information types, message strategies, nonverbal usage, etc.), and hashtag (e.g., types of hashtag). The coding scheme for the variables of the current study was created by combining existing categories from past research.

***Background of Photos.*** The location of where the picture was taken was coded according to three dimensions: outdoor, indoor, and studio. For example, in a forest, desert, park, private patio, and backyard were included in the outdoor category, while in a café, bar, bus, living room, and car were considered as indoor. Studio backgrounds typically featured objects in front of plain background such as in a photography studio.

***Context.*** Pictures were coded in seven categories of context to investigate in which situation the brand or product was shown in the picture posted on Instagram. The categories were adopted from Hu, Manikonda, and Kambhampati's study (2014), which characterized the types of photos posted on Instagram. The seven categories were daily life (e.g., school or company), object only (i.e., item that is not related to the coded brand), experience such as leisure, travel, or entertainment, current activity that showed a person doing something right now, fashion /beauty, friendship and family, and foods. The coding for each measurement item used two nominal categories: 1 indicated it was available or depicted, and 0 indicated not available or not depicted.

***Components.*** A total of ten components appeared in the pictures posted on brand Instagram accounts: human including any part of the human body, celebrity, brand (e.g., brand logo and name), actual product of the brand, package of product, object excluding the brand's product, advertisement, non-human/non animated animal, nature (e.g., tree, flower, river, etc.), and text. These components were coded as "Yes" (present) or "No" (absent). See Figure 3.1 as an example.

***Anthropomorphism.*** Pictures posted on brand accounts on Instagram were coded based on Brown's (2010) personification typology that classifies nuances within brand

personification strategies employed in pictures on Instagram. There were three types of human or humanized representations; anthropomorphism, zoomorphism, and teramorphism. Anthropomorphism is the personification type in which the brand is embodied with a human name and characteristics such as the Marlboro Man. Zoomorphism refers to a humanized animal that stands for the brand such as Tony the Tiger for the Kellogg's brand. Teramorphism is derived from "tetralogy," in which a spiritual creature is humanized and acts on behalf of the brand such as M&M's characters.

***Personal Pronouns.*** Captions were analyzed based on the use of personal pronouns such as first-person (e.g., I, my, me, myself, we, and us), second-person (e.g., you, your, yours, and yourself), and third-person (e.g., he/she, his/her, him/her, himself/herself, they, them, and their) pronouns (Pollach 2005; Insche 2008).

***Imperative Form.*** Verbs in the imperative form that were used to express direct commands or requests were coded. The items were adopted from Pollach (2005) and modified for this Instagram study. Eleven items for actions types encompassed the following: a Call 800 number, use/purchase, visit/check out the URL, email/send a (direct) message, comment (e.g., why would you order wings without Budweiser?), share/repost, sign up, follow, participation a promotion, be a fan on other social media, and enjoy. The coding for each measurement item used two nominal categories: 1 indicated available or depicted, and 0 indicated not available or not depicted.

***Nonverbal Cues.*** Five categories for the nonverbal cues were adopted from Nastri, Pena and Hancock (2006) including emoticons (e.g., :-), ☺, ^^), abbreviations [e.g., "LOL or "lol" for laugh out loud, "omg" for oh my god, "thnx" for thanks, "w/" for

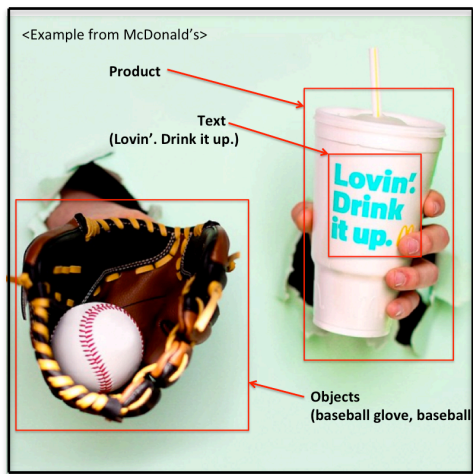
with, “LMK” for let me know, “ur” for your, “ttyl” for talk to you later, etc.), repeated punctuation (e.g., Woo hoo Friday!!!!!!!, hmm....., Wow~~~~, etc.), and intentional misspelling (e.g., I’m sooooooooo happy, Thiiiiiiiiis much, Wowwwwww, etc.). The coding for each measurement item used two nominal categories: 1 indicated available or depicted, and 0 indicated not available or not depicted.

***Information Type.*** Information types typology was adopted from Kwon and Sung (2011) and modified for this Instagram study. The typology was based on the 14-item typology of Resnik & Stern (1977) with 5 additional informational cues developed from Choi et al. (2006) to reflect current changes in the media environment. In this study, information was categorized into four types. First, product-related information includes price/value, quality, performance, components/contents of product, and so forth. Second, brand-related information includes research results (e.g., independent research/ranks, sponsored research, etc.) and announcement from a brand (e.g., job/career, new idea, etc.). Third, party information and coupons or special offers are categorized as promotion-related information. Fourth, socially responsible events information are coded as social responsibility. The coding for each measurement item used two nominal categories: 1 indicated available or depicted, and 0 indicated not available or not depicted.

***Relationship-maintenance Strategy.*** Four relationship-maintenance strategies were used for the current study (Stafford and Canary 1991): openness, positivity, networking, and shared tasks. First, openness generally includes brand information, product information, and a link to the official website. Therefore, in the current study,

link to the brand's official website, brand behind story, product behind story, and employee story were regarded as indicators. Second, positivity is operationalized as any attempt to enable ease of using Instagram, to make its users satisfied, and to make it enjoyable for users. Therefore, the URL, a link to the brand's other SNSs, or link to a particular event web page were indicators. Networking refers to any effort of the brand to build a network with current and future consumers; thus, indicators include reposting, sponsorships, events, affiliations/social groups, and media relations. Last, the operational definition of shared tasks included social responsibility initiatives such as economic, legal, ethical, and environmental social issues.

Figure 3.1: Components of Picture



### **Coding Procedure and Inter coder Reliability**

Two coders who are doctoral students in Advertising were recruited as independent coders for the study. The coders were given a coding book that contained the variables and their definitions along with links to the 660 brand postings on Instagram. They first reviewed coding categories, previewed samples of posts, and practiced using the coding scheme. Based on the coders' feedback, a few unclear and disputed items were discussed and clarified, and minor relevant changes were made to the coding sheet as necessary.

The coders then conducted a pilot test on 6 posts from each of 33 brands for the reliability test. Inter coder Reliability, computed as the percentage of agreement, reached 95.52% on average overall, ranging from 73.74% to 100%. Each coder received 429 posting that included 20 randomly selected postings from 33 brands (2 brands from each industry types).

### **Sample Characteristics**

#### ***Results for Brand Account Level Characteristics***

The results for the brand account level characteristics are described below. For a summary, see Table 3.2.

***Brand Account Starting Date.*** Among the Top 100 Interbrand brands in 2015, 87 brands had an Instagram account. The averaged date of starting brand Instagram accounts was 111weeks before April 2016, which was the beginning of 2014. H&M (216 weeks ago) and American Express (216 weeks ago) are the first two brands that



started to share posts followed by BMW (201 weeks ago) and Louis Vuitton (184 weeks ago); in comparison, Starbucks (30 weeks ago) had the shortest history of sharing posts with consumers followed by Thomson Reuters (43 weeks ago) and Accenture (46 weeks ago).

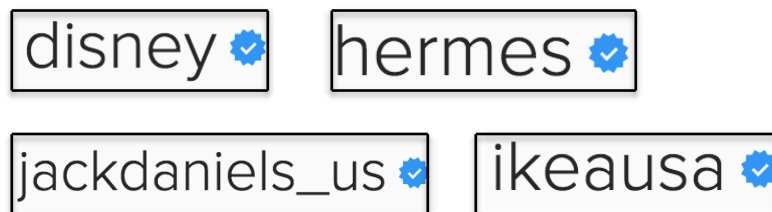
***Brand's Country of Origin (COO).*** Among the sample, the U.S.-based brands were dominant with more than 60% (20 brands; i.e., Nike, Starbucks, Disney, Google, McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Amazon, Pepsi, Microsoft, GE, Budweiser, Jack Daniel's, American Express, IBM, FedEx, 3M, ups, Accenture, Kellogg's and Citi), followed by France (9.1%, 3 brands; i.e., L'oreal, Louis Vuitton, and Hermes). Several countries listed two brands (6.1%, 2 brands) such as Sweden (i.e., H&M and IKEA), Germany (i.e., Adidas and BMW), Netherlands (i.e., Shell and Phillips) and Japan (i.e., Canon and Toyota). Only one brand was listed by Canada (3%, 1 brand; i.e., Thomson Reuters) and Spain (3%, 1 brand; i.e., ZARA).

***Brand's Number of Followers and Followings.*** Table 3.2 below lists a summary of sample characteristics analyzed and sorted by the number of followers; the number of followers averaged about 3.5 million (3,493,359). Nike was the top brand with about 43 million followers, followed by H&M (13.6 million), Zara (10.5 million), and Louis Vuitton (10.5 million) whereas Citi (6,755) had the lowest number of followers followed by Thomson Reuters (7,177), L'oreal (8,081) and Kellogg's (9,922). On average, the brands were following 173 other users' accounts on Instagram. Starbucks was following accounts the most by following 1871 accounts followed by Coca-Cola (690 accounts) and Phillips (423 accounts). However, American Express and Budweiser

were following only one account, and Hermes was not following any of accounts on Instagram.

**Brand Account's Username.** Of the 27 sample brands, 81.8% used an Instagram account username that was same as their brand name (e.g., disney, hermes, americanexpress, etc.). However, 6 brands chose a username as the brand name with the region specified as USA or US. For example, jackdaniels\_us for Jack Daniel's, toyotausa for Toyota, canonusa for Canon, kelloggsus for Kellogg's, lorealus for L'oreal and ikeausa for IKEA (see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: Brand Account's Username



**Brand Account's Profile Picture.** Most of the sample brands (87.8%, 29 brands) used a profile picture with their brand logo. Even though 4 brands did not include the brand's logo, they used brand cues such as a signature product (e.g., aluminum can for Coca-Cola), another type of logo (e.g., animated logo for Google), or Mickey Mouse for Disney (see Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3: Brand Account's Profile Picture without Brand's Logo



**Brand Account Bio.** The Bio, along with the username and profile picture, is one of the first components that consumers see when they reach a brand's account on Instagram and helps them form their first impression. The Bio makes the Instagram profile more impressive and memorable. In reality, most of brands (97%, 32 brands) use the Bio as a greeting, for example: Welcome to the official Toyota USA Instagram page; Official Instagram for IKEA USA—sharing design inspiration from the Life Improvement Store. Other brands use the Bio to explain their brand: for example, Thomson Reuters provides professionals with the intelligence, technology and human expertise they need to find; Here we will give you a behind-the-scenes look at the future of energy, our innovative technologies & the work we do in communities around the world. Still other brands use the Bio to convey the spirit of the enterprise such as the following: Life is best lived on your own terms; Delivering a more colorful, connected world, Pepsi is only brand.

Eleven or the 33 brands (33.3%) used personal pronouns. However, all of those brands used 2nd (18.2%) or 3rd (21.2%) person pronouns; none used 1st person pronouns. Our results indicate that only 4 brands (12.1%) contained at least one type of

nonverbal cue in the Bio. Emoticons were the most frequent (3), followed by an abbreviation (1).

*External Sources on Brand Profile page.* Some brands included external sources to expose their brands to customers by using hashtag(s), a link to the official website, or a link to a video/webpage included in the Bio. Of the 11 brands that included a hashtag, only one, BMW, contained two hashtags, and that brand was the only brand that contained a hashtag that was their brand name. Other than BMW, all the 10 other brands included a brand-intended hashtag such as #ThisBudsForYou for Budweiser, #TeamCanon for Canon, #Lifewith3M for 3M, etc. Eighteen brands included a link to a video or webpage, for example, to promote a campaign ([stirupbreakfast.kelloggs.com](http://stirupbreakfast.kelloggs.com)), to announce a new feature ([bit.ly/TheSpectrumVideo](http://bit.ly/TheSpectrumVideo)), or to introduce another type of brand community ([like2b.uy/canonusa](http://like2b.uy/canonusa)).

Table 3.2: Overall Characteristics of Samples Sorted by Total Followers

Brand	Country of Origin	Industry Type	First Posting Date (ago)	Total Followers	Total Following	Total # of Post
Nike	US	Sporting Goods	111w	43m	131	832
H&M	Sweden	Apparel	216w	13.6m	287	2250
ZARA	Spain	Apparel	112w	10.5m	41	986
Louis Vuitton	France	Luxury	184w	10.5m	5	1376
Starbucks	US	Restaurants	30w	8.4m	1871	1044
Adidas	Germany	Sporting Goods	138w	8m	87	876
BMW	Germany	Automotive	201w	6.4m	71	2525
Disney	US	Media	160w	4.9m	23	1178
Hermes	France	Luxury	135w	2.2m	0	840
Google	US	Technology	98w	1.5m	9	238
McDonald's	US	Restaurants	81w	1.3m	57	322
Coca-Cola	US	Beverages	59w	1.1m	690	512
IKEA	Sweden	Retail	126w	657k	40	1139
Canon	Japan	Electronics	85w	568k	85	1143
Amazon	US	Retail	117w	482k	310	952
Pepsi	US	Beverages	146w	450k	92	358
Microsoft	US	Technology	64w	412k	186	245
Toyota	Japan	Automotive	171w	391k	214	1373
GE	US	Diversified	68w	222k	229	670
Budweiser	US	Alcohol	83w	145k	1	537
Jack Daniel's	US	Alcohol	105w	141k	66	562
American Express	US	Financial Services	216w	122k	1	1045
IBM	US	Business Services	78w	71k	145	378
Shell	Netherlands	Energy	54w	66.1k	5	418
FedEx	US	Transportation	159w	41.8k	87	364
3M	US	Diversified	161w	24.1k	151	342
Ups	US	Transportation	74w	22.8k	33	206
Phillps	Netherlands	Electronics	53w	21.7k	423	636
Accenture	US	Business Services	46w	11.4k	77	309
Kellogg's	US	FMCG	114w	9922	40	247
L'oreal	France	FMCG	130w	8081	159	559
Thomson Reuters	Canada	Media	43w	7177	67	217
Citi	US	Financial Services	124w	6755	22	244

## Results

Results of analyses at the posting level are reported below. For a summary, see Table 3.3 through 3.10.

### *General Characteristics of Pictures and Captions*

“Likes” and comments on Instagram brand accounts were considered to be indicators of engagement with brands. Of the 660 postings of 33 brands analyzed in the current study, the average number of likes was 38,885 with a maximum of 395,700

(Nike) and a minimum of 81.5 (Thomson Reuters). The top two most liked brands after Nike were Starbucks (218,450) and H&M (116,860), and the least liked brands after Thomson Reuters were citi (99.5) and L'oreal (119.26). The average number of comments was 273 with a maximum of 7,299 (Nike) followed by Starbucks (1366.7) and BMW (729.45), and least number of comments were for Accenture (2), Thomson Reuters (2.25), and 3M (2.5). Only 9.4 % (62 postings) tagged location, indicating where the photo on their post was taken, and none of postings included a link to other SNSs.

There are two ways to describe a specific brand or person related to the brand's posting: (1) in the caption using @ sign right before a brand or a person's account name (see Figure 3.4) and (2) tagging on a picture by using the tag function (see Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.4: Example of Person Mentioned in Caption

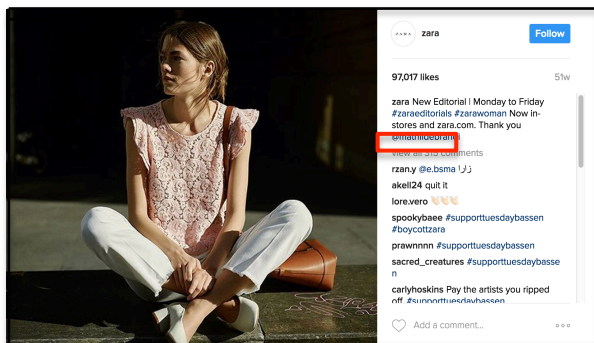
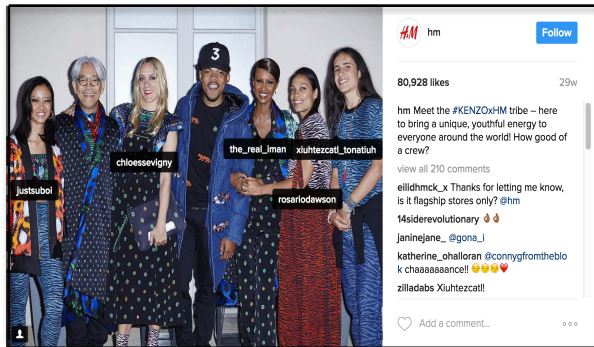


Figure 3.5: Example of Person Tagged on Image



The global brands analyzed in the current study mentioned a brand or a person's account in a caption more often than they tagged a brand or a person's account in a photo. For example, 6.7% (44 out of 660 postings) of brands mentioned a brand name in the caption, while 32.1% (212 out of 660 postings) of brands mentioned a person's account name in a caption. In contrast, only 5.2% (34 out of 660 postings) of brands tagged a brand in a photo, while 6.2% (41 out of 660 postings) of brands tagged a person's account in a photo.

Table 3.3. The Results of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) between Number of Likes (Comments) and Brand/Person Mentioning/Tagging

	<i>N</i> (660)		Mean		<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Tagging</i>	Yes	No	Yes	No			
Brand tagged on photo	34	626	60635.72 (361.49)	37703.94 (269.17)	1	10.10 (0.90)	0.001** (0.343)
Person tagged on photo	41	619	50886.80 (261.00)	3090.34 (274.78)	1	4.09 (0.02)	0.043* (0.876)
<i>Mentioning</i>							
Brand mentioned in caption	44	616	38516.27 (211.13)	38911.63 (278.41)	1	0.01 (0.67)	0.947 (0.419)
Person mentioned in caption	212	448	37476.06 (208.13)	39631.55 (350.52)	1	0.46 (7.96)	0.498 (0.005**)

*Note.* Number of followers were controlled. Results for number of comments are reports in parenthesis.

\* Statistically significant at .05 level

\*\* Statistically significant at .01 level



### ***Posting Level Characteristics by Industries***

Following the Global Industry Classification Standard (GICS), 17 industry types were pared down to 7 industry sectors. Those sectors are Consumer staples (i.e., Alcohol, Beverage, FMCG), Consumer Discretionary (i.e., Automotive, Media, Retail), Fashion (i.e., Apparel, Luxury, Sporting Goods), Consumer Service (i.e., Diversified, Restaurant), Information Technology (i.e., Business Service, Technology), Industrials (i.e., Electronics, Transportation), and Financial & Energy (i.e., Financial Services, Energy).

### ***Types of Images and Information on Photo***

The results for the use of images and information are described below. Also, summarized results are available in Table 3.4.

***Background.*** There are three types of backgrounds that show the location where the picture was taken: studio, outdoor, and indoor. Pictures were taken in a studio more often (40.2%, 265 out of 660 pictures) than outdoors (37%, 244 out of 660 pictures) or indoors (22.9%, 151 out of 660 pictures). The location where pictures were taken varied by industry categories. Studio pictures were used the most often by 4 industry sectors: Consumer Services (61.3%, 49 out of 80 pictures), Fashion (52.5%, 63 out of 120 pictures), Consumer Staples (43.3%, 52 out of 120 pictures), and Information Technology (40%, 32 out of 80 pictures). The other three industry categories used an outdoor background the most: Industrials (73.8%, 59 out of 80 pictures), Financial & Energy (53.3%, 32 out of 60 pictures), and Consumer Discretionary (35.8%, 42 out of 120 pictures) ( $\chi^2 = 103.32, p \leq .001$ ).

**Context.** Among the seven coded contexts of the posted pictures, more than a third of the images (34.5%, 228 pictures of the 660 pictures) contained an object only, which refers to an object posted in a picture on Instagram that was not related to the product or packaging. An object was dominant in pictures in the context of Consumer Discretionary (52.5%, 63 out of 120 pictures) and Consumer Services (51.2%, 41 out of 80 pictures) ( $\chi^2 = 54.89, p \leq .001$ ). More than a fourth of brand pictures posted on Instagram (27.1%, 179 out of 660 pictures) involved scenes from daily life such as school or a workplace, and most of those were found in the context of Information Technology (47.5%, 38 out of 80 pictures) and Financial & Energy (40%, 24 out of 60 pictures) ( $\chi^2 = 35.39, p \leq .001$ ). The category of current activity, showing a person doing an activity in the present moment (e.g., cooking, driving, exercising, etc.), was the third most frequently contained context (21.4%, 141 out of 660 pictures). None of the industry categories focused specifically on current activity; rather those scenes were broadly used across industries [e.g., Consumer Discretionary (37.5%, 45 out of 120 pictures), Fashion (26.7%, 32 out of 120 pictures), etc.] ( $\chi^2 = 41.43, p \leq .001$ ). With regard to the category of food, 18.6% (122 out of 660 pictures) of Instagram pictures included foods, and the majority (69.2%, 83 out of 122 pictures) of the pictures were featured in the category of Consumer Staples ( $\chi^2 = 319.39, p \leq .001$ ). Other pictures represented someone's experience: for example, leisure, travel, and entertainment -13.9% (92 out of 660 pictures) ( $\chi^2 = 264.1, p \leq .001$ ); and Fashion/Beauty - 16.2% (107 out of 660 pictures) ( $\chi^2$

= 48.65,  $p \leq .001$ ). Only 4.9% (32 out of 660 pictures) of brand pictures included family and friendship ( $\chi^2 = 5.25, p = .513$ ).

**Components.** Similar to the context of the picture, objects were the most commonly presented as a component in brand pictures on Instagram (55.4%, 364 out of 660 pictures) followed by a picture of an actual product of a brand (47.9%, 316 out of 660 pictures) and brand name or logo (33.8%, 223 out of 660 pictures). Those three components were conspicuously displayed in certain industries. Industry categories included Financial & Energy (78.3%, 47 out of 60 pictures), Information technology (73.8%, 59 out of 80 pictures), Industrials (63.7%, 51 out of 80 pictures), and consumer Services (53.8%, 43 out of 80 pictures) ( $\chi^2 = 57.78, p \leq .001$ ). In addition, the actual product was featured more than half of pictures in Fashion (75%, 90 out of 120 pictures), Consumer Discretionary (55%, 66 out of 120 pictures) and Consumer Services (53.8%, 43 out of 80 pictures) categories ( $\chi^2 = 128.84, p \leq .001$ ). In comparison, the brand name or logo was shown in 65.8% (79 out of 120 pictures) of pictures in Consumer Staples ( $\chi^2 = 102.15, p \leq .001$ ). Pictures with text on the photos accounted for 23.2% (153 pictures) of the total number of photos analyzed, with higher usage in the Consumer Services industry (40%, 32 out of 80 pictures) ( $\chi^2 = 32.86, p \leq .001$ ). In contrast, only 18.3% (121 pictures) of the total sample of pictures contained scenes of nature with higher usage in the Industrials industry sector (45%, 36 out of 80 pictures) ( $\chi^2 = 60.97, p \leq .001$ ). Only a small portion of pictures involved packages of a brand or product (3.8%, 25 out of 660 pictures) ( $\chi^2 = 25.58, p \leq .001$ ), advertisement (3.8%, 25 out of 660 pictures) ( $\chi^2 = 13.80, p \leq .05$ ), and non-human animals (3.3%, 22 out of 660 pictures) ( $\chi^2 = 30.129, p \leq .001$ ).

**Information Types.** Informational cues identified included product functional information (73.6%, 486 postings), brand information (12.9%, 85 postings), promotion information (10.9%, 72 postings), and socially responsible activities (7.9%, 52 postings). The use of informational cues varied by industry category. The most dominant form of information, product information, was found in more than half the postings across all industry categories. For example, 91.7% (55 out of 60 postings) of postings in Financial & Energy industries provided functional information about a product or brand, followed by Information Technology (87.5%, 70 out of 80 postings), Consumer Services (85%, 68 out of 80 postings), Consumer Staples (70%, 84 out of 120 postings), Fashion (68.3%, 82 out of 120 postings), Consumer Discretionary (68.3%, 82 out of 120 postings), and Industrials (56.3%, 45 out of 80 postings) ( $\chi^2 = 40.04, p \leq .001$ ). Brand accounts also provided brand information including announcements and research results (12.9%, 85 out of 660 postings). Financial & Energy (28.3%, 17 out of 60 postings) and Information Technology (22.5%, 18 out of 80 postings) were the top two industry categories that willingly shared brand information with consumers ( $\chi^2 = 39.49, p \leq .001$ ). Brand promotion information was also provided on Instagram and used most frequently for Consumer Staples (16.7%, 20 out of 120 postings) ( $\chi^2 = 16.09, p = .19$ ). Socially responsible information was rarely shared (7.9%, 52 out of 660 postings) compared to other types of information. Financial & Energy industries used social responsible information (16.7%, 10 out of 60 postings) most often among the industry sectors ( $\chi^2 = 16.98, p < .05$ ) (see Table 3.4 for detailed results).

Table 3.4: Use of Images and Information

	Consumer Staples (n= 120)	Consumer Discretionary (n= 120)	Fashion (n= 120)	Consumer Services (n= 80)	Information Technology (n= 80)	Industrials (n= 80)	Financial Energy (n= 60)	& Total (n= 660)
<b>Background</b> ( $\chi^2 = 103.32$ )**								
Outdoor	29 (24.2%)	43 (35.8%)	41 (34.2%)	21 (26.3%)	19 (23.8%)	59 (73.8%)	32 (53.3%)	244 (37%)
Indoor	39 (32.5%)	36 (30%)	16 (13.3%)	10 (12.5%)	29 (36.3%)	11 (13.8%)	10 (16.7%)	151 (22.9%)
Studio	52 (43.3%)	41 (34.2%)	63 (52.5%)	49 (61.3%)	32 (40%)	10 (12.5%)	18 (30%)	265 (40.2%)
<b>Context</b>								
Object Only ( $\chi^2 = 54.89$ )**	47 (39.2%)	63 (52.5%)	24 (20%)	41 (51.2%)	20 (25%)	25 (31.3%)	8 (13.3%)	228 (34.5%)
Experience ( $\chi^2 = 48.65$ )**	11 (9.2%)	19 (15.8%)	16 (13.3%)	7 (8.8%)	11 (13.8%)	32 (40%)	11 (18.3%)	107 (16.2%)
(Leisure+Travel+Entertainment)								
Daily Life ( $\chi^2 = 35.39$ )**	29 (24.2%)	28 (23.3%)	18 (15%)	16 (20%)	38 (47.5%)	26 (32.5%)	24 (40%)	179 (27.1%)
Current Activity ( $\chi^2 = 41.43$ )**	17 (14.2%)	45 (37.5%)	32 (26.7%)	2 (2.5%)	16 (20%)	16 (20%)	13 (21.7%)	141 (21.4%)
Fashion+Beauty ( $\chi^2 = 264.10$ )**	13 (10.8%)	2 (1.7%)	71 (59.2%)	1 (1.3%)	2 (2.5%)	0 (0%)	3 (5%)	92 (13.9%)
Friendship+Family	9 (7.6%)	5 (4.2%)	3 (2.5%)	2 (2.5%)	5 (6.3%)	4 (5%)	4 (6.7%)	32 (4.9%)
( $\chi^2 = 5.25, p = .513$ )								
Foods+Drinking ( $\chi^2 = 319.39$ )**	83 (69.2%)	2 (1.7%)	0 (0%)	28 (35%)	2 (2.5%)	2 (2.5%)	5 (8.3%)	122 (18.6%)
<b>Components</b>								
Human ( $\chi^2 = 76.60$ )**	61 (50.8%)	41 (34.2%)	92 (76.7%)	27 (33.8%)	57 (71.3%)	35 (43.8%)	42 (70%)	355 (53.8%)
Celebrity ( $\chi^2 = 29.92$ )**	5 (4.2%)	0 (0%)	9 (7.5%)	0 (0%)	9 (11.3%)	0 (0%)	3 (5%)	26 (3.9%)
Brand ( $\chi^2 = 102.15$ )**	79 (65.8%)	36 (30%)	15 (12.5%)	28 (35%)	10 (12.5%)	26 (32.5%)	29 (48.3%)	223 (33.8%)
Actual Product ( $\chi^2 = 128.84$ )**	73 (60.8%)	66 (55%)	90 (75%)	43 (53.8%)	4 (5%)	27 (33.8%)	13 (21.7%)	316 (47.9%)
Package ( $\chi^2 = 25.58$ )**	7 (5.8%)	7 (5.8%)	0 (0%)	9 (11.3%)	0 (0%)	2 (2.5%)	0 (0%)	25 (3.8%)
Object(s) exclude product	72 (61.5%)	51 (42.5%)	41 (34.2%)	43 (53.8%)	59 (73.8%)	51 (63.7%)	47 (78.3%)	364 55.4%)
( $\chi^2 = 57.78$ )**								
AD ( $\chi^2 = 13.80$ )*	7 (5.8%)	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.7%)	5 (6.3%)	2 (2.5%)	1 (1.3%)	6 (10%)	25 (3.8%)
Animal ( $\chi^2 = 30.13$ )**	1 (0.8%)	13 (10.8%)	3 (2.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.3%)	4 (5%)	0 (0%)	22 (3.3%)
Nature ( $\chi^2 = 60.97$ )**	5 (4.2%)	27 (22.5%)	18 (15%)	18 (22.5%)	9 (11.3%)	36 (45%)	8 (13.3%)	121 (18.3%)
Text ( $\chi^2 = 32.86$ )**	28 (23.3%)	27 (22.7%)	19 (15.8%)	32 (40%)	24 (30%)	5 (6.3%)	18 (30%)	153 (23.2%)
<b>Infomation Type</b>								
Product Info ( $\chi^2 = 40.04$ )**	84 (70%)	82 (68.3%)	82 (68.3%)	68 (85%)	70 (87.5%)	45 (56.3%)	55 (91.7%)	486 (73.6%)
Brand Info (Announcement+Research)	9 (7.5%)	14 (11.7%)	12 (10%)	13 (16.3%)	18 (22.5%)	2 (2.5%)	17 (28.3%)	85 (12.9%)
( $\chi^2 = 39.49$ )**								
Promotion	Info 20 (16.7%)	16 (13.3%)	9 (7.5%)	6 (7.5%)	6 (7.6%)	11 (13.8%)	4 (6.7%)	72 (10.9%)
(Entertainment+Promotion)								
( $\chi^2 = 16.09, p = .187$ )								
Social Responsibility	7 (5.8%)	5 (4.2%)	5 (4.2%)	5 (6.3%)	11 (13.8%)	9 (11.3%)	10 (16.7%)	52 (7.9%)
( $\chi^2 = 16.98$ )*								

N=660; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p \leq .001$

### ***Consumers' reactions on use of image and information***

One-way Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was performed to examine the relationship between characteristics of a brand's photo postings (i.e., types of photos and information in the photos) and consumers' reactions to postings (i.e. number of likes and number of comments). The number of followers was entered as a covariate to control its effects on dependent variables (see Table 3.5 for detailed results).

The results of ANCOVA ( $F = 0.66$ ,  $p > .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ ) indicated no significant difference in the number of likes between studio ( $M = 40906.95$ ,  $SD = 90063.73$ ), outdoor ( $M = 37095.92$ ,  $SD = 78772.92$ ), and indoor ( $M = 38228.70$ ,  $SD = 77953.71$ ) backgrounds when the number of likes were controlled. In contrast, with respect to the number of comments, a significant effect of background of postings was found ( $F = 7.89$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .02$ ). Specifically, the studio background ( $M = 371.30$ ,  $SD = 457.02$ ) was most likely to receive the greatest number of comments compared to the outdoor ( $M = 202.32$ ,  $SD = 457.02$ ) and indoor ( $M = 158.21$ ,  $SD = 475.13$ ) backgrounds.

The ANCOVA then further examined the association between contexts of postings and the set of dependent variables. Specifically, object-only postings ( $M = 36879.40$ ,  $SD = 66325.74$ ) were significant in terms of the number of likes ( $F = 10.87$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .02$ ) and number of comments ( $M = 377.61$ ,  $SD = 795.95$ ;  $F = 13.38$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .02$ ). Postings that contained daily life were found to have interesting results. Specifically, users liked photos showing daily life ( $M = 42128.33$ ,  $SD = 69601.26$ ;  $F = 13.38$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .02$ ). However, they were less likely to leave comments ( $M = 306.81$ ,  $SD = 790.98$ ) on photos that featured daily life ( $F = 6.82$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ ). The

results also indicated no significant difference in the number of likes ( $F = 1.59, p > .05, \eta^2 = .01$ ) and comments ( $F = 1.35, p > .05, \eta^2 = .01$ ) between photos with and without current portraying a consumer's current activity. The positive effects of food photos were significant in terms of the number of likes ( $M = 55888.20, SD = 73874.31$ ) as well as the number of comments ( $M = 478.3, SD = 712.89$ ). That is, individuals tended to like ( $F = 32.28, p < .001, \eta^2 = .05$ ) photos showing food and to leave comments ( $F = 23.91, p < .001, \eta^2 = .04$ ) on those photos. Regarding the context of experience, significant differences were not found in terms of the number of likes and the number of comments. Brand postings that contained fashion and beauty contexts were found to have negative effects on the number of likes ( $M = 42314.19, SD = 85992.02$ ) and comments ( $M = 302.25, SD = 733.42$ ). Specifically, fewer likes ( $F = 32.44, p < .001, \eta^2 = .05$ ) and comments ( $F = 11, p < .01, \eta^2 = .02$ ) were found on photos containing fashion and beauty. Finally, the results revealed no significant differences with regard to dependent variables between the postings in the context of friends or family.

As for components of postings, significant influences on dependent variables were found when postings included components such as object, human, brand, and packaging. Specifically, postings that contained objects (not a product) were less likely to receive comments ( $M = 326.66, SD = 907.24, F = 4.87, p < .05, \eta^2 = .01$ ). The results revealed a significant difference for the human component in terms of the number of likes ( $M = 35082.97, SD = 61604.64$ ). A greater number of likes were obtained when postings did not include humans ( $F = 7.56, p < .01, \eta^2 = .01$ ). Similarly, photos that included no humans ( $M = 350.52, SD = 709.63$ ) were more likely to have comments ( $F = 11.70, p <$

.01,  $\eta^2 = .02$ ). When the brand was included as a component of the posting, there was a significant positive effect on number of likes ( $M = 46559.14$ ,  $SD = 88417.91$ ,  $F = 13.84$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .02$ ). Additionally, a brand as a component ( $M = 368.73$ ,  $SD = 795.94$ ) received a greater number of comments ( $F = 10.79$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .02$ ). Finally, photos showing a package were found to have positive effects on the number of likes ( $M = 66791.75$ ,  $SD = 55685.64$ ) and the number of comments ( $M = 650.08$ ,  $SD = 581.93$ ). That is, a package in a photo received more likes ( $F = 14.19$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .02$ ) and more comments ( $F = 13.21$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .02$ ). No other components were significant.

With regard to the effect of information types of postings related to liking a posting, mean differences were not significant between product information ( $M = 38414.71$ ,  $SD = 81453.87$ ), brand information ( $M = 36475.91$ ,  $SD = 54062.66$ ), and promotion information ( $M = 33671.58$ ,  $SD = 34327.39$ ). Information about what a brand does for social responsibility ( $M = 39889.17$ ,  $SD = 38261.12$ ) received fewer likes than postings without a reference to social responsibility ( $F = 5.37$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ ). The results revealed no significant differences in the number of comments between information types on photos.



Table 3.5: The Results of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) Between Number of Likes (Comments) and Use of Image and Information

Types of Image/Info	N(660)		Mean		df	F	p
<b>Background</b>					2	0.66 (7.89)	0.516 (0.000***)
Studio	265		40906.95 (371.30)				
Outdoor	244		37095.92 (191.38)				
Indoor	151		38228.70 (236.43)				
<b>Context</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>			
Object only	228	432	45592.82 (377.61)	35345.17 (219.21)	1	10.87 (13.38)	0.001** (0.000***)
Daily life	179	481	42128.33 (185.57)	30170.68 (306.81)	1	13.05 (6.82)	0.000** (0.009**)
Current Activity	141	519	42541.17 (226.87)	37892.05 (286.71)	1	1.59 (1.35)	0.208 (0.246)
Foods+Drinking	130	526	55888.20 (478.30)	34951.95 (225.20)	1	32.28 (23.91)	0.000*** (0.000***)
Experience	118	542	34071.91 (186.87)	39933.20 (292.88)	1	2.30 (3.86)	0.130 (0.050)
Fashion+Beauty	93	567	17979.90 (101.25)	42314.19 (302.25)	1	32.44 (11.00)	0.000*** (0.001**)
Friendship+Family	33	626	34705.34 (231.28)	39157.57 (274.48)	1	0.43 (0.21)	0.514 (0.649)
<b>Components</b>							
Object(s) excluding product	364	293	38116.47 (233.69)	40237.21 (326.66)	1	0.49 (4.87)	0.484 (0.028*)
Human	355	305	35082.97 (208.13)	43310.90 (350.52)	1	7.56 (11.70)	0.006** (0.001**)
Actual product	316	344	41945.79 (296.94)	36073.87 (252.79)	1	3.67 (1.06)	0.056 (0.304)
Brand	223	437	46559.14 (368.73)	34969.32 (225.55)	1	13.84 (10.79)	0.000*** (0.001**)
Text	153	506	34757.11 (324.91)	40203.31 (259.03)	1	2.39 (1.79)	0.123 (0.181)
Nature	121	539	39346.47 (189.70)	38781.74 (292.84)	1	0.02 (3.71)	0.883 (0.054)
Celebrity	26	633	32999.72 (106.18)	39167.28 (281.11)	1	0.65 (2.70)	0.420 (0.101)
Package	25	635	66791.75 (650.08)	37786.59 (259.12)	1	14.19 (13.21)	0.000*** (0.000***)
AD	25	635	20229.60 (400.56)	39619.75 (268.94)	1	0.01 (1.47)	0.959 (0.226)
Animal	22	638	45655.34 (363.50)	38651.82 (270.84)	1	0.72 (0.64)	0.398 (0.423)
<b>Information Type</b>							
Product	486	174	38414.71 (262.33)	40199.61 (306.33)	1	0.28 (0.88)	0.597 (0.350)
Brand	85	574	36475.91 (274.61)	39252.65 (273.94)	2	0.21 (0.01)	0.812 (0.993)
Promotion	72	585	33671.58 (263.91)	39493.89 (275.64)	2	1.08 (0.03)	0.299 (0.859)
Social responsibility	52	608	27147.42 (153.69)	39889.17 (284.21)	1	5.37 (2.88)	0.021* (0.090)

Note. Number of followers were controlled. Results for number of comments are reports in parenthesis.

\* Statistically significant at .05 level

\*\* Statistically significant at .01 level

\*\*\* Statistically significant at .001 level

### ***Use of Human representations on Instagram (human, celebrity, anthropomorphism)***

Of the 660 postings, 53.8% (355 pictures) featured human on pictures on Instagram, but only 3.9% (26 pictures) of pictures included celebrities. Brands in the industry categories of Fashion (76.7%, 92 out of 120 pictures) and Information Technology (71.3%, 57 out of 80 pictures) used use more photos of humans in Instagram pictures ( $\chi^2 = 76.60, p < .001$ ). Celebrity endorsers were featured the most in pictures for the Information Technology brands (11.3%; 9 out of 80 pictures) followed by Fashion (7.5%; 9 out of 120 pictures) and Financial and Energy (5%; 3 out of 60 pictures) ( $\chi^2 = 29.92, p < .001$ ). Global brands used brand personification strategies in pictures very rarely ( $\chi^2 = 17.13, p = .145$ ). Only 0.7% (4 out of 660 pictures) used either human-like features (3 pictures) or humanized animal features (1 pictures) (see Table 3.6 for detailed results).

Table 3.6: Use of Human Representations on Instagram (human, celebrity, anthropomorphism)

	Consumer Staples (n= 120)	Consumer Discretionary (n= 120)	Fashion (n= 120)	Consumer Services (n= 80)	Information Technology (n= 80)	Industrials (n= 80)	Financial & Energy (n= 60)	Total (n= 660)
<b>Product Personification</b> ( $\chi^2 = 17.13, p = .145$ )								
Anthropomorphism	0 (0%)	1 (0.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (2.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (0.5%)
Zoomorphism	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.2%)
<b>Components</b>								
Human ( $\chi^2 = 76.60$ )**	61 (50.8%)	41 (34.2%)	92 (76.7%)	27 (33.8%)	57 (71.3%)	35 (43.8%)	42 (70%)	355 (53.8%)
Celebrity ( $\chi^2 = 29.92$ )**	5 (4.2%)	0 (0%)	9 (7.5%)	0 (0%)	9 (11.3%)	0 (0%)	3 (5%)	26 (3.9%)

N=660; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p \leq .001$

### *Use of personal pronouns, imperative form, nonverbal cues*

For summarized results, see Table 3.7.

Global brands used third-person pronouns the most frequently (55.91%, 269 out of 660 postings) followed by first-person pronouns (22.27%, 147 out of 660 postings) and second-person pronouns (20.15%, 133 out of 660 postings). Third-person pronouns appeared most often in industry categories of Information Technology (55%, 44 out of 80 postings) and Financial & Energy (55%, 33 out of 60 postings) ( $\chi^2 = 20.62, p < .05$ ). In comparison, first-person pronouns were used more in the category of Consumer Discretionary (30%, 36 out of 120 postings) ( $\chi^2 = 15.10, p < .05$ ), and second-person pronouns were used more for the Consumer Staples (27.5%, 33 out of 120 postings) and Discretionary industries (27.5%, 33 out of 120 postings) ( $\chi^2 = 22.21, p < .001$ ).

No significant differences were found among variety forms of imperative verbs used in captions ( $\chi^2 = 9.38, p = .15$ ). The three most frequently used imperative forms were Visit/Check out the URL (16.97%, 112 out of 660 postings) ( $\chi^2 = 41.74, p < .001$ ), Enjoy (10.76%, 71 out of 660 postings) ( $\chi^2 = 52.60, p < .001$ ) and Use/Purchase (10%, 66 out of 660 posting) ( $\chi^2 = 34.68, p < .001$ ). Those verbs were significantly different among industry categories.

Emoticons were used 15.75% of the total postings (104 out of 660 postings). Across industry categories, Information Technology used emoticons most often (30%, 24 out of 80 postings) followed by Consumer Discretionary (25.83%, 31 out of 120 postings) and Consumer Services (22.5%, 18 out of 80 postings) ( $\chi^2 = 43.75, p < .001$ ) (See Table 3.7 for detailed results).

Table 3.7: Use of Personal Pronouns, Imperative Form, and Nonverbal Cues

	Consumer Staples (n = 120)	Consumer Discretionary (n = 120)	Fashion (n = 120)	Consumer Services (n = 80)	Information Technology (n = 80)	Industrials (n= 80)	Financial & Energy (n= 60)	Total (n= 660)
<b>Personal Pronoun</b>								
1 <sup>st</sup> person ( $\chi^2 = 15.1$ )*	27 (22.5%)	36 (30%)	15 (12.5%)	15 (18.75%)	21 (26.25%)	23 (28.75%)	10 (16.67%)	147 (22.27%)
2 <sup>nd</sup> person ( $\chi^2 = 22.21$ )**	33 (27.5%)	33 (27.5%)	22 (18.3%)	17 (21.3%)	13 (16.3%)	14 (17.5%)	1 (1.7%)	133 (20.15%)
3 <sup>rd</sup> person ( $\chi^2 = 20.62$ )*	47 (39.2%)	36 (30%)	47 (39.2%)	26 (32.5%)	44 (55%)	36 (45%)	33 (55%)	269 (55.91%)
<b>Imperative Form</b> ( $\chi^2 = 9.38$ , $p = .154$ )								
Call 800#	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Use/Purchase ( $\chi^2 = 34.68$ )**	9 (7.5%)	11 (9.2%)	25 (20.8%)	14 (17.5%)	0 (0%)	5 (6.3%)	2 (3.3%)	66 (10%)
Visit/check out the URL ( $\chi^2 = 41.74$ )**	17 (14.2%)	18 (15%)	30 (25%)	8 (10%)	28 (35%)	1 (1.3%)	10 (16.7%)	112 (16.97%)
Email/Send a message ( $\chi^2 = 9.81$ , $p = .133$ )	3 (2.5%)	0	1 (0.8%)	0	0	0	0	4 (0.61%)
Ask Comments ( $\chi^2 = 9.33$ , $p = .156$ )	10 (8.3%)	15 (12.5%)	3 (2.5%)	9 (11.3%)	6 (7.5%)	6 (7.5%)	6 (10%)	55 (8.33%)
Share/Repost ( $\chi^2 = 26.01$ )**	8 (6.7%)	2 (1.7%)	0	2 (2.5%)	4 (5%)	4 (5%)	9 (15%)	29 (4.39%)
Sign up ( $\chi^2 = 16.95$ )*	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.7%)	0	0	2 (2.5%)	2 (2.5%)	5 (8.3%)	13 (1.97%)
Follow ( $\chi^2 = 14.83$ )*	0	5 (4.2%)	0	0	2 (2.5%)	0	1 (1.7%)	8 (1.21%)
Participating promotion ( $\chi^2 = 24.64$ )**	a 10 (8.3%)	1 (0.8%)	0	1 (1.3%)	2 (2.5%)	0	2 (3.3%)	16 (2.42%)
Be a fan on other SNS ( $\chi^2 = 10.18$ , $p = .117$ )	3 (2.5%)	1 (0.8%)	1 (0.8%)	0	4 (5%)	4 (5%)	1 (1.7%)	14 (2.12%)
Enjoy ( $\chi^2 = 52.60$ )**	26 (21.7%)	10 (8.3%)	1 (0.8%)	9 (11.3%)	2 (2.5%)	20 (25%)	3 (5%)	71 (10.76%)

Table 3.7: continued..

<b>Nonverbal Cues</b>								
Emoticons ( $\chi^2 = 43.75$ )**	14 (11.67%)	31 (25.83%)	9 (7.5%)	18 (22.5%)	24 (30%)	7 (8.75%)	1 (1.67%)	104 (15.76%)
Abbreviation ( $\chi^2 = 4.51, p = .608$ )	0	1 (0.83%)	0	0	0	0	0	1 (0.15%)
Repeated Punctuation ( $\chi^2 = 4.51, p = .608$ )	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1 (0.15%)
Intentional Misspelling ( $\chi^2 = 8.26, p = .219$ )	1 (0.83%)	3 (2.5%)	0	0	0	0	1 (1.67%)	5 (0.76%)

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N=660; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p \leq .001$

### *Consumer's reactions to use of personal pronouns, imperative form, nonverbal cues*

An ANCOVA model was employed to investigate the effects of personal pronouns, imperative forms, and nonverbal cues on consumers' responses to postings, using one covariate – number of followers. For the detailed results, see Table 3.7 below.

The results revealed no significant difference in the number of likes between first-person pronouns ( $M = 35945.90$ ,  $SD = 82647.83$ ) and second-person pronouns ( $M = 36124.27$ ,  $SD = 81686.87$ ). However, a significant negative effect of third-person pronoun ( $M = 41816.03$ ,  $SD = 65107.12$ ) was found. Specifically, the use of third-person pronoun in a posting was less likely to result in consumer likes ( $F = 5.70$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ ). There were no significant differences in the number of consumer comments between types of personal pronouns.

With regard to ten forms of imperative verbs that brands used in its posting, the results showed no significant differences in the number of likes. Of the ten forms, three were found to have positive effects on the number of comments. First, a posting containing “enjoy” was more likely to receive a greater number of comments ( $M = 378.40$ ,  $SD = 530$ ,  $F = 0.08$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ ). In addition, an imperative form using “use/purchase” ( $M = 401.76$ ,  $SD = 660.25$ ) was a significant factor relative to the number of comments ( $F = 4.23$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ ). Finally, the results revealed that there was a significant effect on the number of comments received ( $M = 435.97$ ,  $SD = 663.91$ ) on “ask for comments” ( $F = 5.57$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ ).

Nonverbal cues were found to have positive effects on consumers' responses to a brand's postings. Specifically, there was a significant effect in response to emoticons ( $M$

= 47850.67,  $SD = 62090.83$ ) on the number of likes ( $F = 6.87, p < .01, \eta^2 = .01$ ). Other nonverbal cues (i.e., abbreviations, repeated punctuation, intentional misspellings) were also found to have a favorable impact on the number of likes ( $M = 46598.61, SD = 22698.13, F = 5.45, p < .01, \eta^2 = .02$ ). Finally, emoticons ( $M = 371.87, SD = 592.11$ ) were a significant factor in generating a number of consumer comments ( $F = 4.19, p < .05, \eta^2 = .01$ ).



Table 3.8. The Results of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) between Number of Likes (Comments) and Use of Personal Pronouns, Imperative Form, and Nonverbal Cues

Interactions with Consumers	<i>N</i> (660)		Mean		<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Personal Pronoun	Yes	No	Yes	No			
First-person pronoun	147	513	35945.90 (247.22)	39727.55 (281.58)	1	1.124 (0.48)	0.289 (0.491)
Second-person pronoun	133	527	36124.27 (285.63)	39582.07 (270.97)	1	0.87 (0.08)	0.350 (0.777)
Third-person pronoun	269	391	34625.32 (228.40)	41816.03 (305.25)	1	5.70 (3.33)	0.017* (0.069)
<b>Imperative Form</b>							
Visit the URL	112	548	35011.86 (253.55)	39676.92 (278.09)	1	1.38 (0.20)	0.241 (0.659)
Enjoy	71	589	46224.87 (378.40)	38000.53 (261.33)	1	2.93 (0.08)	0.088 (0.005**)
Use/Purchase	66	594	4516.89 (401.76)	38037.31 (259.72)	1	2.93 (4.23)	0.087 (0.04*)
Ask for comments	55	605	35961.68 (435.97)	39151.05 (259.20)	1	0.35 (5.57)	0.554 (0.019*)
Ask for share/repost	29	631	35335.37 (236.22)	39048.42 (275.66)	1	0.26 (0.15)	0.61 (0.698)
Participating a promotion	16	644	32798.48 (227.66)	39036.50 (275.08)	1	0.42 (0.12)	0.519 (0.726)
Be a fan on other SNSs	14	646	39056.021 (170.72)	31006.38 (276.16)	1	0.61 (0.54)	0.435 (0.464)
Sign up	13	647	32831.53 (210.04)	39006.9 (275.21)	1	0.33 (0.19)	0.564 (0.663)
Follow	8	651	36457.23 (229.81)	38969.81 (274.72)	1	0.03 (0.56)	0.853 (0.813)
Email/Send a message	4	656	11170.75 (250.25)	39054.26 (274.07)	1	1.13 (0.01)	0.287 (0.932)
<b>Nonverbal Cues</b>							
Emoticons	104	556	47850.67 (371.87)	37208.29 (255.61)	1	6.87 (4.19)	0.009** (0.041*)
Others	107	551	46598.61 (358.04)	37163.04 (255.40)	2	5.45 (2.98)	0.004** (0.05)

**Note.** Number of followers were controlled. Results for number of comments are reports in parenthesis.

\* Statistically significant at .05 level

\*\* Statistically significant at .01 level

### ***Relationship strategies***

Detailed results are available in Table 3.9. Of the 660 postings, 41.52% used openness strategies (274 postings), such as providing a brand behind-the-story (131 postings), product behind-the-story (65 postings), an employee story (42 postings), and a brand's official website (36 postings). Openness was the most frequently used strategy in the Financial & Energy industry (58.3%, 35 out of 60 postings) followed by Information Technology (50%, 40 out of 80 postings), Consumer Discretionary (40.83%, 49 out of 120 postings), Fashion (40%, 48 out of 120 postings), and Consumer Services (38.75%, 31 out of 80 postings) ( $\chi^2 = 88.42, p < .001$ ).

The second most frequently used relationship strategy on Instagram was networking strategies (35.3%, 233 out of 660 postings), which included reposting (156 postings), events (46 postings), sponsorships (19 postings), affiliations (9 postings), and media relations (3 postings). Those kinds of networking strategies were more often found in two industry sectors, Industrials (56.25%, 45 out of 80 postings) and Consumer Staples (34.17%, 41 out of 120 postings) ( $\chi^2 = 148.36, p < .001$ ).

Postings that contained positivity strategies made up 14.39% (85 postings) of the 660 postings; URL (70 postings), Link to SNSs (10 postings), and Link to an event (5 postings) ( $\chi^2 = 98.05, p < .001$ ).

Shared tasks strategies accounted for only 9.09% (60 postings) of the total postings, while environmental and philanthropic activities were used in 38 postings followed by economic (13 postings), legal (5 postings) and ethical (4 postings) ( $\chi^2 = 82.06, p < .001$ ) (See Table 3.9 for detailed results).

Table 3.9: Use of Relationship Strategies

	Consumer Staples (n= 120)	Consumer Discretionary (n= 120)	Fashion (n= 120)	Consumer Services (n= 80)	Information Technology (n= 80)	Industrials (n= 80)	Financial & Energy (n= 60)	Total (n= 660)
<b>Positivity</b> ( $\chi^2 = 98.05$ )**								
- URL	5 (4.2%)	4 (3.3%)	29 (24.2%)	2 (2.5%)	24 (30%)	0 (0%)	6 (10%)	70 (10.6%)
- Link to SNS	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.7%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.3%)	3 (3.8%)	0 (0%)	2 (3.3%)	10 (1.5%)
- Link to a event	3 (2.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.3%)	1 (1.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (0.8%)
<b>Openness</b> ( $\chi^2 = 88.42$ )**								
Link to brand website	2 (1.7%)	7 (5.8%)	18 (15%)	2 (2.5%)	4 (5%)	1 (1.3%)	2 (3.3%)	36 (5.5%)
Brand behind story	17 (14.2%)	21 (17.5%)	20 (16.7%)	14 (17.5%)	24 (30%)	16 (20%)	19 (31.7%)	131 (19.8%)
Product behind story	9 (7.5%)	12 (10%)	10 (8.3%)	12 (15%)	5 (6.3%)	11 (13.8%)	6 (10%)	65 (9.8%)
Employee story	3 (2.5%)	9 (7.5%)	0 (0%)	3 (3.8%)	7 (8.8%)	12 (15%)	8 (13.3%)	42 (6.4%)
<b>Networking</b> ( $\chi^2 = 148.36$ )**								
Reposting	20 (16.7%)	31 (25.8%)	24 (20%)	14 (17.5%)	15 (18.8%)	43 (53.8%)	9 (15%)	156 (23.6%)
Sponsorships	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.7%)	0 (0%)	2 (2.5%)	3 (3.8%)	0 (0%)	10 (16.7%)	19 (2.9%)
Event	17 (14.2%)	7 (5.8%)	5 (4.2%)	6 (7.5%)	4 (5%)	1 (1.3%)	6 (10%)	46 (7%)
Affiliations/social groups	2 (1.7%)	1 (0.8%)	1 (0.8%)	0 (0%)	3 (3.8%)	1 (1.3%)	1 (1.7%)	9 (1.4%)
Media Relations	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (5%)	3 (0.5%)
<b>Shared Tasks</b> ( $\chi^2 = 82.06$ )**								
Economic	0 (0%)	4 (3.3%)	2 (1.7%)	0 (0%)	2 (2.5%)	0 (0%)	5 (8.3%)	13 (2%)
Legal	0 (0%)	1 (0.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.3%)	0 (0%)	3 (5%)	5 (0.8%)
Ethical	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (0.6%)
Environmental/philanthropic	5 (4.2%)	6 (5%)	3 (2.5%)	6 (7.5%)	5 (6.3%)	10 (12.5%)	3 (5%)	38 (5.8%)

N=660; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p \leq .001$

### ***Consumers' reactions to use of relationship strategies***

One-way ANCOVAs were performed to examine the associations between the online strategies among brands for purposes of establishing relationships with customers (i.e., openness, networking, positivity, shared tasks) and eliciting consumer responses. The number of followers was entered as a covariate. See Table 3.10 for detailed results.

The results revealed that an openness strategy ( $M = 41949.29$ ,  $SD = 71891$ ) used in postings was a significant factor in eliciting a large number of likes; surprisingly, there were fewer likes on postings with openness ( $F = 6.01$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ ). Similarly, postings having positivity strategy were found to have a negative effect on the number of likes ( $M = 40432.76$ ,  $SD = 57400$ ,  $F = 7.40$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ ). No significant networking and shared tasks effects were found relative to the number of likes. The results also indicated that openness ( $M = 309.73$ ,  $SD = 489.78$ ) had a negative influence on the number of comments ( $F = 4.20$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ ). Brand postings with a networking strategy ( $M = 306.44$ ,  $SD = 361.34$ ) also led to a significant negative factor for the number of comments ( $F = 4.42$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ ). There were no significant differences in the number of comments for positivity and shared tasks strategies.

Table 3.10: The Results of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) between Number of Likes (Comments) and Use of Relationship Strategies

Relationship Strategies	<i>N</i> (660)		Mean		<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	Yes	No	Yes	No			
Openness	275	385	34595.64 (223.80)	41949.29 (309.73)	1	6.01 (4.20)	0.014* (0.041*)
Networking	236	424	38723.47 (215.52)	38975.33 (306.44)	1	0.01 (4.42)	0.935 (0.036*)
Positivity	85	575	28416.94 (179.78)	40432.76 (287.85)	1	7.40 (3.05)	0.007** (0.081)
Shared tasks	62	598	30940.84 (165.22)	39708.94 (285.20)	1	2.97 (2.85)	0.085 (0.092)

**Note.** Number of followers were controlled. Results for number of comments are reports in parenthesis.

\* Statistically significant at .05 level

\*\* Statistically significant at .01 level

### **Summary of Findings**

Study One was designed to investigate the messages of the accounts of the TOP 100 Global Brands posted on Instagram. Associations are frequently used by researchers to identify a brand's unique value to consumers and to establish a brand's image (Aaker 1996), so brand associations were adopted as the conceptual framework for Study 1 for the purpose of analyzing messages posted by global brands on Instagram. In addition, consumers' reactions to each strategy used in photos and captions—"likes" and comments—were analyzed as indicators of consumer engagement. See figures 3.6 through 3.8 for a summary of the results.

As for brand-level messages, global brands generally provided comparable information. The information included the username, a profile picture with brand cues, and a bio on the first page of the Instagram account.

At the posting level, the most interesting findings from Study 1 are that the most frequently used components in the pictures and captions do not always encourage consumer engagement in terms of either likes or comments. As such, the results suggest that brand marketers may be able to use pictures and captions posted on Instagram more efficiently and effectively. Analyses of posting-level messages found that different types of strategies were performed on Instagram – in terms of pictures and captions – for the purpose of interacting with consumers. Among the three different backgrounds, studio was found to be the most frequently used background across global brand postings, compared to outdoor and indoor backgrounds. Not surprisingly, visual postings conveyed product-related information the most. However, in-depth analysis conducted to examine

consumers' reactions toward visual postings of brands on Instagram revealed that only pictures with a studio background and with only object(s) unrelated to the product enhanced consumer engagement, in terms of both likes and comments. While they were frequently used approaches, they were not used the majority of the time. Foods and drinking, brand, and the product package also had positive influence in terms of enhancing consumer likes and comments; however, those were not commonly used strategies on brand photos (see Figure 3.6 for a summary of results).

Marketers used the imperative form of verbs, suggesting, for example, that consumers visit/check out a URL, enjoy the posts, and use/purchase of products, and so forth. Nonverbal cues, such as emoticons and repeated punctuation marks were used to convey an emotional expression or to provide an extra explanation. In the captions, 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns, the imperative verb form or Visit/Check out the URL, and emoticons were the most frequently used strategies for brand messages. (See Figure 3.7 for a summary of results related to strategies in captions.) However, only emoticons enhanced consumers engagement in terms of both likes and comments; captions that included 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun had a positive influence only on consumers likes, and captions that included "visit/check out the URL" as an imperative form did not significantly influence consumer engagement. Even though imperative forms such as "enjoy," "see/purchase," and "ask for comments" were rarely used in brand messages on Instagram, they were the imperative forms likely to increase consumer comments.

Global brands directed attention to the building and maintaining of relationships with consumers. Of the four strategies of relationship management, two were found to be

the most commonly used. Specifically, global brands implemented the openness strategy, by providing a link to their official website addresses and behind-the-scene stories. This strategy possibly is designed to give consumers the feeling that they know the brand well because the brand openly provided brand information. Additionally, brands carried out a networking strategy by reposting on other accounts and distributing information regarding a sponsorship or an event. However, in-depth analysis suggested that the use of openness and networking messages, which were the most frequently utilized strategies, received fewer likes and comments. The most frequently used imperative verb forms (i.e., enjoy, use/purchase) led to only partial engagement with consumers who left comments, but did not respond with “likes” of postings. Moreover, brands can post visual content on Instagram, and they can also insert captions for the photographs, offering additional written information for consumers. Brands used captions more frequently than photos to link messages with the accounts of another brand and/or an individual’s account. Subsequent analyses provided additional findings for how consumers respond to Instagram messages posted by brands. Specifically, the presence of tagging another brand and/or a person on a photo elicited a significant number of likes from consumers. Additionally, consumers tended to leave a significant number of comments only on postings that mentioned a person’s name in the caption. Thus, brands were linking with other accounts more in captions, but tagging in photos would elicit more engagement from consumers (see Figure 3.8 for a summary of results).



Figure 3.6: A Summary of Results Related to Use of Image and Information of Pictures

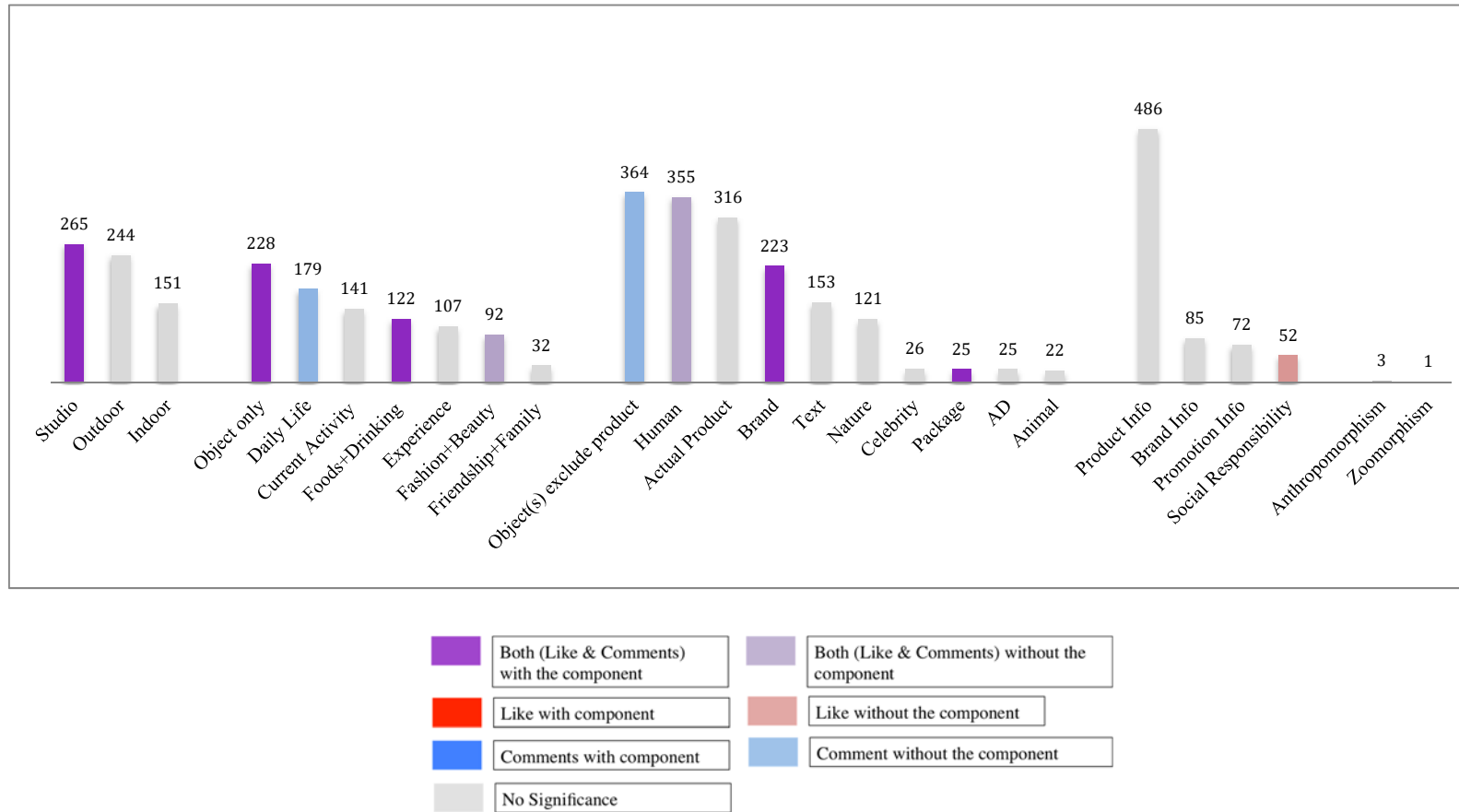


Figure 3.7: A Summary of Results Related to Use of Personal Pronouns, Imperative Form, and Nonverbal Cues in Captions

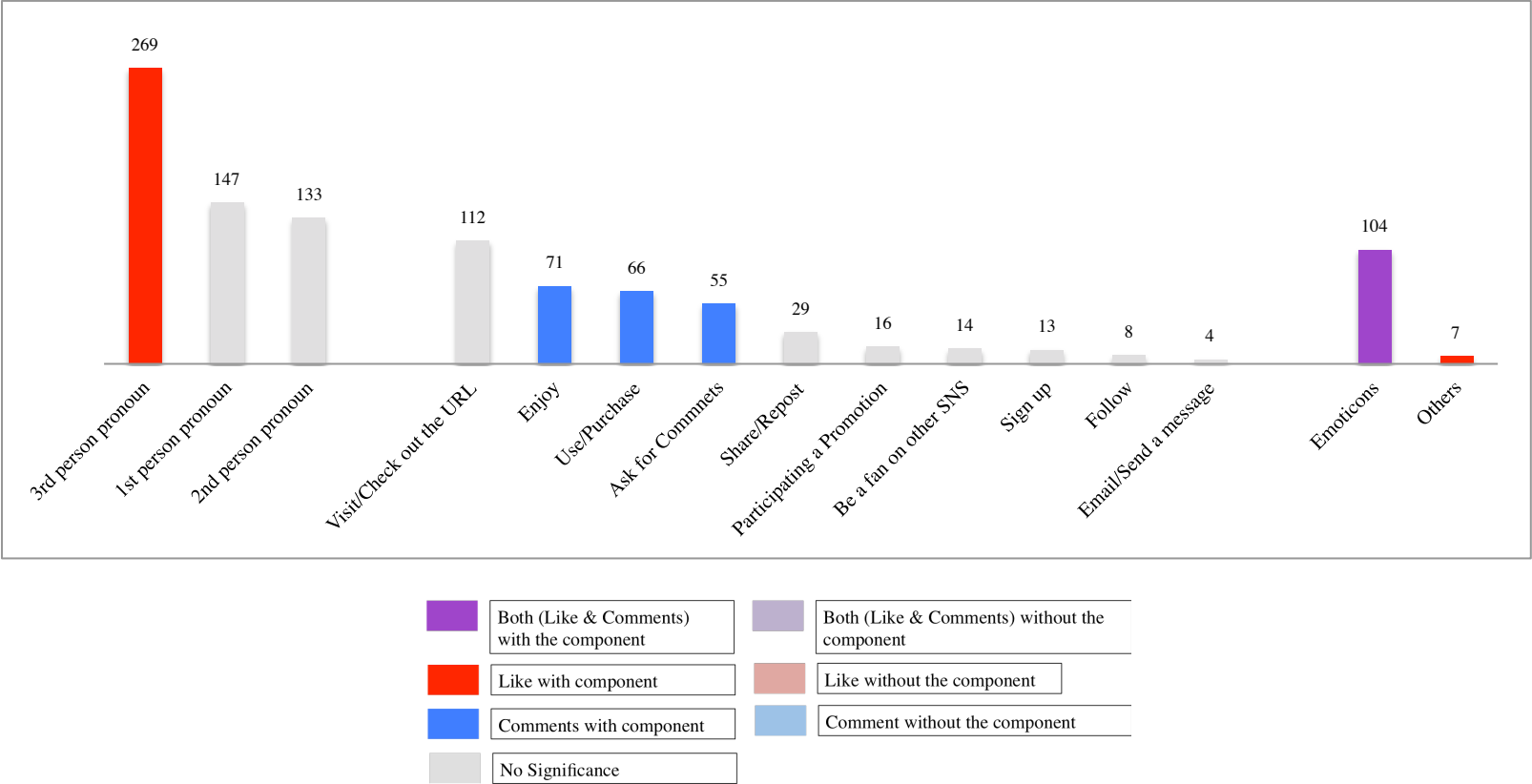
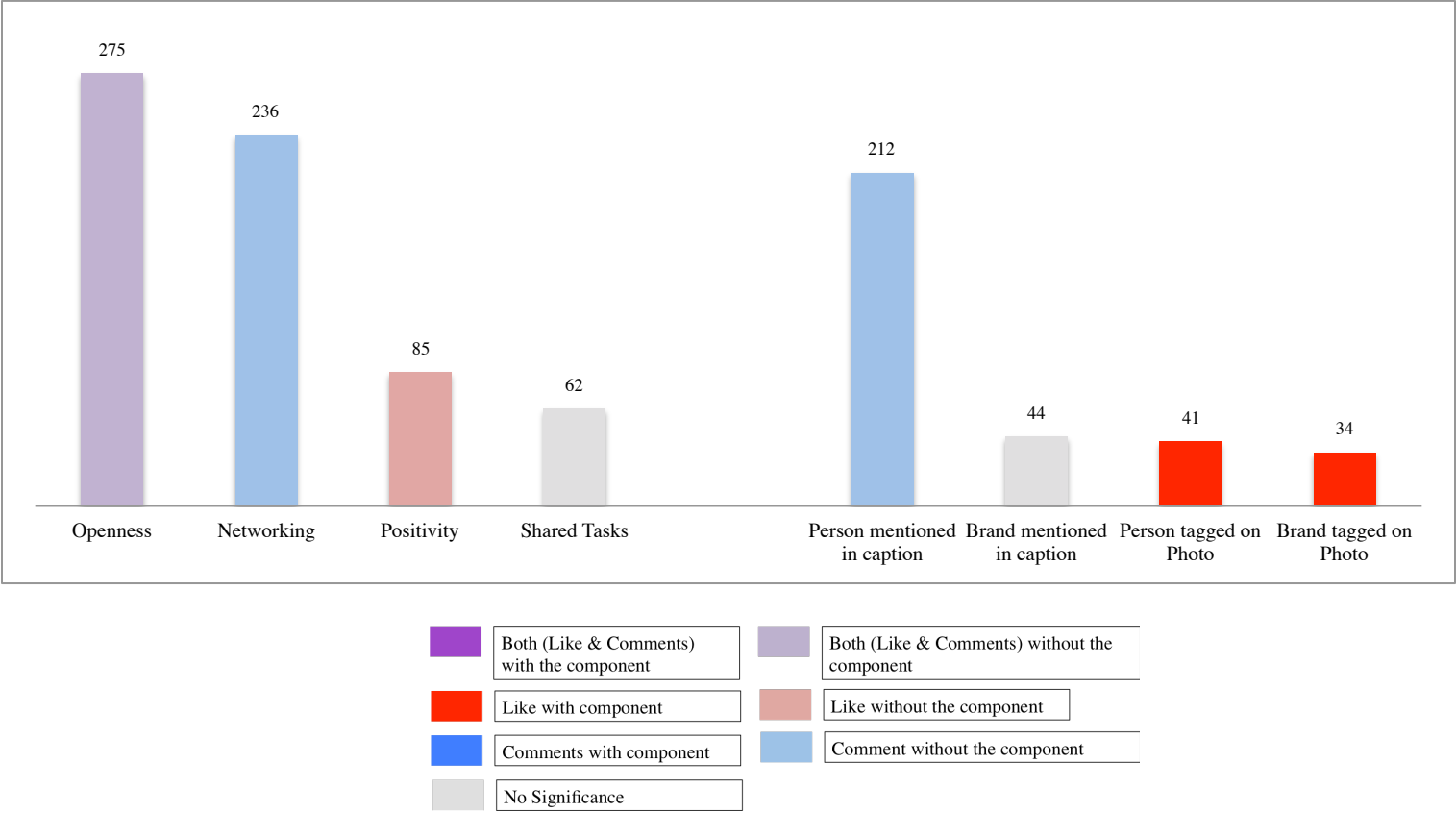


Figure 3.8: A Summary of Results Related to Use of Relationship Strategies and Mentioned/Tagged Brand & Person



## **STUDY 2: CONSUMER MOTIVATIONS OF FOLLOWING BRAND ACCOUNTS ON INSTAGRAM**

Most of interactions in social media settings are visible to current and future consumers, channel partners, competitors, and investors. Therefore, it is becoming more important for marketers and brand managers to understand the motives and needs of consumers in order to know what to upload and how to react in response to others' actions. Despite the popularity and potential of Instagram as a useful branding communication tool, academic research on the Instagram platform has been limited. Specifically, little is known about the social and psychological factors that lead consumers to engage with commercial brands on Instagram. From a practical perspective, marketers and brand managers need to understand how to meet consumers' expectations and how to reinforce the consumer-brand relationship in a virtual context. Therefore, Study 2 was conducted 1) to identify social and psychological factors that lead consumers to engage in brand accounts on Instagram and 2) to examine the relationships between identified motives and brand account involvement outcome variables such as eWOM frequency, attitude toward following brand, brand satisfaction, brand trust, pass along intention, and intention to buy.

### **Generation of Motivation Items**

A two-step process was employed to develop a list of scale item for individuals' motivations to follow a brand's account on Instagram. Step one focused on items derived from prior studies. Topics of those studies focused on virtual brand communities

(Dholakia, Bagozzi and Pearo 2004; Ouwersloot and Odekerken-Scroder 2008; Sheldon and Bryant 2016; Sung, Kim, Kwon and Moon 2010) as well as benefits users derived from engaging in relationships with brands (Gwinner, Gremler and Bitner 1998), on SNSs such as Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest. From those studies, a total of 50 motivations were identified as being relevant to Instagram users. Many of the motivations overlapped; therefore, a decision was made to reduce the total number to those items applicable to Instagram users. Therefore, 24 items were eliminated, leaving 26 motivation items that were adopted for the current study.

In step two, consumers who follow brand accounts were interviewed in order to identify motivations relevant to the context of Instagram. In order to produce spontaneous answers, informal interviews were conducted in a public area. Respondents were recruited in a major metropolitan city in the Southwestern U.S. based on questions about their use of Instagram, their following of brand accounts, and their willingness to participate in the study. Age, gender and ethnicity were recorded with interviewees' consent and understanding that the responses would be used only for academic purposes. The interviewees included 17 Instagram users (6 men, 11 women) ranging in age from 18 to 32 years who had been using Instagram for 8 to 60 months. Interviews began with a brief explanation of the purpose of the study followed by questions about the number and names of brands interviewees were following on Instagram. Next, interviewees were asked why they followed brands on Instagram.

Individual respondents were following, on average, 20 brand accounts on Instagram that included global brands (e.g., BMW, Seven Eleven, L'Oréal, etc.).

Wholefoods, Canon, Anthropology, Lush Costmetics, etc.) as well as local brands (e.g., Alamo Draffhouse, Lady Bug, etc.). In response to the “why” question, the respondents listed a total of 23 motivations. Some items overlapped with items identified from literature, but 13 new items were derived from the interviews and combined with those from the literature producing a total of 39 motivations for individuals to engage with brand accounts on Instagram (see Appendix C, question number 11, for all items related to motivations)

### **Data Collection**

Because the goal of Study 2 was to examine the motivations of consumers who follow brand account on Instagram, participants were drawn from Amazon Mechanical Turk and a large university in the U.S. The data were collected during a one-month period between March and April 2016. Based on the goal of this study, participants were limited to brand account followers on Instagram only. The online Mechanical Turk panel is an opt-in, consensual, and privacy-protected subject pool for online research. After reading the study description, qualified and consenting participants were directed to the web-based survey. All participants who completed the survey received virtual currency incentives.

## Measures

**eWOM.** Electronic Word-of-Mouth frequency was measured by asking respondents to answer the following questions while thinking about all brands they are following on Instagram. The following are the four items that respondents answered: “How often do you ‘**Like**’ a brand’s posting on Instagram?” “How often do you leave a **comment** about a brand’s posting on Instagram?,” “How often do you ‘**repost**’ a brand’s posting on Instagram?,” and “How often do you use ‘**send to**’ to forward a brand’s posting to your friends on Instagram?” Response options consisted of “Rarely”, “Less than once a month,” “A few times a month,” “Once a week,” “A few times a week,” “Once a day,” and “Several times a day.”

**Attitude Toward Following Brands.** To measure respondents’ attitudes toward following brands, 3-items with a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree) were used (Lee and Aaker 2004). The statements included “To me, the brands that I am following on Instagram are positive”, “To me, the brands that I am following on Instagram are good.”, and “To me, the brand that I am following on Instagram are favorable.” Responses were averaged for subsequent analyses ( $M = 5.63$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ , Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .91$ ).

**Brand Trust.** Consumers’ brand trust was measured using 4 items: “I trust this brand.”, “I rely on this brand.”, “This is an honest brand.”, and “This brand is safe.” using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree (He, Li and Harris 2012) ( $M = 5.17$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ,  $\alpha = .88$ ).

**Brand Satisfaction.** Brand satisfaction was assessed using 3 items with a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree) adopted from Aaker, Fournier and Brasel (2004). The statements included “I am completely satisfied with the brands that I am following on Instagram,” “I am completely pleased with the brands that I am following on Instagram.”, and “Following brands on Instagram is turning out better than I expected.” ( $M = 5.17, SD = 1.06, \alpha = .83$ ).

**Intention to Pass Along a Brand's Postings.** Consumers' intention to pass along a brand's messages was measured by participants' indication of what to what extent they agree with the three statements ranging from “1 = strongly disagree” to “7 = strongly agree.” For example, “I plan to pass along the brand's posting.”, “I will make an effort to pass along the brand's postings.” and “I intend to pass along the brand's postings.” (Ajzen 2002; 2006; Ajzen and Fishbein 1980) ( $M = 3.53, SD = 1.57, \alpha = .950$ ).

**Willingness to Buy.** The willingness to buy in the future was assessed by three items on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “1 = strongly disagree” to “7 = strongly agree.” adopted from Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal (1991). The statements included: “Compared to the brands that I am NOT following on Instagram, the likelihood of purchasing products from the brands that I am following on Instagram is higher.”, “If I were in the market, I would consider buying products from the brands that I am following on Instagram.”, and “Based on the information that is given on the Instagram accounts of the brands that I am following, I would consider buying the products from the brands that I follow on Instagram.” ( $M = 5.38, SD = 1.11, \alpha = .85$ ).



## **Results**

### ***Background Information***

Over a one-month period, a total of 325 people participated in Study 2. Of that total, seven respondents were deleted from the analysis because they did not complete the survey. Thus, 318 respondents were included in the analysis. The final sample was composed of 102 male (32.1%) and 216 female (67.9%) respondents.

The average age of the respondents was approximately 24 years with the youngest respondent being 18 and the oldest respondent being 54 ( $SD = 6.16$ ). More than 50% of the respondents had attended college but did not graduate (51.6%; 164 people). About 30% of respondents (29.2%; 93 people) had either an associate degree or Bachelor's degree. The next largest group of participants, 44, graduated from high school (13.8%) with 9 people who had a master's degree (2.8%), followed by 3 respondents who had a professional degree (JD or MD) (0.9%) and 2 with doctoral degree (0.6%). The majority respondents described themselves as Caucasian/White (57.2%; 182 people). Among the other study participants, Hispanic/Latino and Asian were each 16.7% (53 people) of the sample. Respondents who were African American were 5.7% (18 people) and 0.9% of Native American (3 people). See Table 3.11 for the demographic characteristics of respondents.

Table 3.11: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents ( $N = 318$ )

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Female	216	67.9
Male	102	32.1
<b>Age</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
18-24	233	73.3
25-34	6	18.8
35-44	22	7
45-54	3	0.3
<b>Education</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than high school degree	3	0.9
High school graduate	44	13.8
Some college but no degree	164	51.6
Associate degree in college (2-year)	21	6.6
Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)	72	22.6
Master's degree	9	2.8
Doctoral degree	2	0.6
Professional degree (JD, MD)	3	0.9
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Caucasian/White	182	57.2
Black or African American	18	5.7
Hispanic/Latino	53	16.7
Asian	53	16.7
Native American	3	0.9
Other	9	2.8

### ***Respondents' General Instagram Usage***

To understand respondents' general patterns of usage, they were asked to answer questions about the duration of their usage as well as how frequently they checked Instagram and uploaded pictures (see Appendix C). Additionally, they were asked about

the number of pictures they posted, the number accounts they follow, and the number of followers on their private accounts to determine whether they were active users. Participants also indicated the number of brands they followed on Instagram and how many of those brands they actually use or own.

***Usage Duration.*** The average length of time respondents had used Instagram prior to the survey was 42.98 months (Median 48 months) with the longest user use of Instagram being 132 months; the shortest duration of Instagram use was one month before they survey began (SD = 20.70). To see how actively respondents engaged with Instagram, frequency of checking and uploading pictures were investigated.

***Frequency of Checking Instagram.*** Study participants were asked to indicate how often they check Instagram. Among 318 participants, about two-thirds of respondents (65.5%; 208 people) answered that, on average, they check Instagram several times a day, and 15.4% (49 people) checked Instagram at least once a day. About 10.4% (33 people) and 4.1% (13 people) checked Instagram a few times a week and once a week, respectively. Ten among the 318 participants (3.1%) checked Instagram a few times a month, while 0.6% (2 people) checked the application less than once a month. Only 3 people (0.9%) answered they checked Instagram rarely.

***Frequency of Uploading Pictures.*** In response to the question about how often participants uploaded pictures on Instagram, 36.5% of the respondents (116 people) uploaded pictures a few times a month followed, while 20.1% (64 people) uploaded pictures less than once a month; 14.5% (46 people) rarely upload pictures, while 13.5% (43 people) uploaded photos once a week; 9.4% (30 people) uploaded a few times a

week; 4.4% (14 people) uploaded once a day, and 1.6% (5 people) uploaded several times a day.

***Number of Picture, Followers, Followings, Following Brands.*** The average number of pictures on respondents' Instagram accounts were 188.52 ( $SD = 322.90$ ) with a minimum of 0 and maximum of 3,494. On average, respondents reported 662.25 followers ( $SD = 947.89$ ). One participant had no followers on Instagram, while one participant had 13,700 followers. With minimum of 1 and a maximum 7,461, the average number of accounts that respondents were following was 527.75 ( $SD = 554.35$ ). Among 318 participants, 21 respondents followed only one brand on Instagram, while one participant followed 1,275 brands. The average of number of brands followed was 30.14 ( $SD = 99.65$ ).

***Number of Brands Actually Used Among Brands Followed.*** The study participants were asked to answer how many brands they were actually using among the brands they were following on Instagram. Twenty-two respondents did not use any of the brands they were following on Instagram, while one participant reported using 500 brands among those followed on Instagram. On average, respondents used 10.40 brands of those brands they were following on Instagram ( $SD = 32.45$ ). See Table 3.12 for a summary of usage statistics.

Table 3.12: Respondents' General Instagram Usage ( $N = 318$ )

Frequency of Checking Instagram	N	%		
Rarely	3	0.9		
Less than once a month	2	0.6		
A few times a month	10	3.1		
Once a week	13	4.1		
A few times a week	33	10.4		
Once a day	49	15.4		
Several times a day	208	65.4		
Frequency of Uploading A Picture				
Rarely	46	14.5		
Less than once a month	64	20.1		
A few times a month	116	36.5		
Once a week	43	13.5		
A few times a week	30	9.4		
Once a day	14	4.4		
Several times a day	5	1.6		
	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Usage Duration (Months)	42.98	20.70	1	132
Number of Picture	188.52	322.90	0	3,494
Number of Followers	662.25	947.89	0	13,700
Number of Followings	527.75	554.35	1	7,461
Number of Following Brands	30.14	99.65	1	1,275
Number of Brands Actually Using Among Following Brands	10.40	32.45	0	500

### ***Factor Analysis of Brand Account Followers' Motives***

Highly intercorrelated factors represent dimensions that help to create new composite measures within data (Hair, Anderson, Babin & Black 2010). Therefore, for Study 2, a principal component analysis (PCA) was used to summarize a large number of variables by examining the relationships among sets of variables (Pallant 2007). PCA with varimax rotation was performed to identify the underlying structure of motivations for following brand accounts on Instagram. The PCA was evaluated using the following criteria: eigenvalue (greater than 1.0), variance explained by each component, loading score for each factor ( $\geq |0.50|$ ), and meaningfulness of each dimension. After deleting 6 items, which had either high loadings on more than one component or loading scores of less than  $|0.50|$ , the PCA was rerun. Further, a parallel analysis (PA) was conducted to determine the number of factors to be extracted (O'Connor 2000). The results revealed that the eigenvalues of the first seven components extracted from the PCA exceeded those obtained from the random data (Ndatasets = 1000, percent = 95). Based on these results, a meaningful and interpretable seven-component solution was obtained, and the seven components explained 66.68% of the total variance (see Table 3.13 for detailed results).

As shown in Table 3.13, the first component, *social interaction*, accounted for 32.18% of the variance and consisted of twelve items such as “To help other brand community members,” “To feel accepted and approved of in the brand community,” “To gain social status or social position among others,” “To build a close relationship with a brand’s community members,” “To have something to do you with others,” “To impress

other people,” “To show others what I like,” and so on. The second component, *Brand Love*, with six items, explained 14.11% of the variance ( $\alpha = .86$ ). The second component included the following items: “Because I love the brand,” “Because I like the brand,” “Because I am interested in this brand,” “To learn more about the brand,” “Because this brand means a lot to me,” and “Because I just like the brand’s photos.” The third component, *Affinity for Instagram*, accounted for 5.26% of the variance ( $\alpha = .78$ ) and included four items: “Because Instagram is more accurate than other SNSs because it has photos,” “Because Instagram is the only way to get information about the brand,” “Because Instagram is quicker and shorter than other SNSs,” and “To see how the brand interacts with consumers.” The fourth component, *Brand Admiration* with four items, explained 4.510% of the variance ( $\alpha = .74$ ): “Because the brand is so popular”, “Because the brand is what I use regularly”, “Because I plan to buy the brand in the future”, and “To use the brand as reference for fashion.” The fifth component, *Entertainment*, accounted for 3.96% of the variance ( $\alpha = .72$ ) and included three items: “To pass time when I am bored,” “To be entertained,” and “To relax.” The sixth component, *Decision Making*, explained 3.49% of the variance ( $\alpha = .71$ ) with two items: “To decide what to buy” and “To make sure that I’ve made the correct decision.” Finally, the seventh component, *Information*, accounted for 3.18% of the variance ( $\alpha = .72$ ) and included two items: “To get incentives” and “To get information that I can’t get elsewhere.”

Table 3.13: Brand Account Following on Instagram Motivation Scales and Individual Items (N=318)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean	SD
<b><i>Social Interaction (<math>\alpha=.94</math>)</i></b>									
To help other brand community members	<b>.845</b>	-.070	.159	-.047	.154	.096	.138	2.978	1.647
To feel accepted and approved of in the brand community (e.g., affiliation)	<b>.841</b>	-.041	.081	.200	.091	.007	.095	3.022	1.685
To gain social status or social position among others	<b>.835</b>	.010	.066	.176	.0570	.0170	-.013	2.915	1.729
To build a close relationship with a brand's community members	<b>.812</b>	-.109	.172	-.035	.151	.083	.203	3.116	1.647
To get help from other brand community members	<b>.801</b>	-.038	.158	-.058	.133	.141	.194	3.006	1.635
To have something to do with others	<b>.781</b>	.066	.128	.200	.0330	-.019	-.139	3.173	1.725
To impress other people	<b>.758</b>	.007	.0860	.246	.006	-.025	-.064	2.915	1.693
To show others what I like	<b>.734</b>	.250	.129	-.057	-.064	.215	.012	3.468	1.789
To give my opinion about the brand	<b>.711</b>	.268	.058	.113	-.032	.048	-.060	3.745	1.815
To get to know others in a brand community	<b>.675</b>	-.049	.279	-.001	.087	.201	.185	3.481	1.739
To be identified with a brand	<b>.664</b>	.263	.259	.256	-.044	.003	-.118	3.764	1.793
To express my support for the values represented by the brand	<b>.584</b>	.380	.140	.046	.094	.204	-.081	4.254	1.785
<b><i>Brand Love (<math>\alpha=.86</math>)</i></b>									
Because I love the brand	.076	<b>.774</b>	.055	.182	.112	-.016	.184	5.657	1.260
Because I like the brand	-.090	<b>.773</b>	-.070	.179	.156	.023	.227	6.003	1.043
Because I am interested in this brand	-.008	<b>.765</b>	-.033	.168	.210	.124	.113	5.830	1.057
To learn more about the brand	.162	<b>.681</b>	.163	.021	.109	.337	.114	5.364	1.263
Because this brand means a lot to me	.314	<b>.622</b>	.214	.179	.031	-.010	.063	4.965	1.473
Because I just like the brand's photos (i.e., high quality, cool, funny)	-.106	<b>.572</b>	.186	.214	.335	.022	.017	5.729	1.187
<b><i>Affinity for Instagram (<math>\alpha=.78</math>)</i></b>									
Because Instagram is more accurate than other SNSs because it has photos	.331	.078	<b>.793</b>	.138	.037	.084	.048	3.619	1.685
Because Instagram is the only way to get information about the brand (i.e., local brands)	.34	-.03	<b>.682</b>	.055	.054	-.024	.179	3.163	1.779
Because Instagram is quicker and shorter than other SNSs	.169	.171	<b>.636</b>	.332	.123	.175	.04	4.547	1.706
To see how the brand interacts with consumers	.391	.314	<b>.535</b>	-.138	.021	.27	-.072	3.952	1.679



Table 3.13: continued..

<b>Brand Admiration (<math>\alpha=.74</math>)</b>									
Because the brand is so popular	.274	.173	.204	<b>.729</b>	.096	.073	.021	4.685	1.722
Because the brand is what I use regularly	.154	.263	.142	<b>.650</b>	-.035	.174	.157	5.037	1.459
Because I plan to buy the brand in the future	.137	.286	-.088	<b>.549</b>	.108	.137	.106	5.355	1.432
To use the brand as reference for fashion	.015	.175	.317	<b>.522</b>	.297	.353	.076	4.952	1.758
<b>Entertainment (<math>\alpha=.72</math>)</b>									
To pass time when I am bored	.041	.196	-.023	.213	<b>.742</b>	-.084	.085	5.371	1.460
To be entertained	.076	.369	.003	-.023	<b>.726</b>	.144	-.007	5.415	1.354
To relax	.316	.129	.226	.015	<b>.697</b>	.034	-.059	4.355	1.649
<b>Decision Making (<math>\alpha=.71</math>)</b>									
To decide what to buy	.069	.271	.103	.264	.04	<b>.75</b>	.166	5.088	1.514
To make sure that I've made the correct decision	.303	.012	.123	.201	.001	<b>.747</b>	.06	4.132	1.666
<b>Information (<math>\alpha=.72</math>)</b>									
To get incentives (e.g., coupons, cyber money, promotional deals, free samples, member exclusive events, etc.)	.081	.279	.04	.148	-.078	.094	<b>.783</b>	5.374	1.600
To get information that I can't get elsewhere (e.g., clip showing a process of making the brand's product, story behind the brand, etc.)	.055	.307	.155	.103	.111	.114	<b>.781</b>	5.220	1.571
Actual eigenvalue from PCA	<b>10.620</b>	<b>4.655</b>	<b>1.735</b>	<b>1.488</b>	<b>1.306</b>	<b>1.152</b>	<b>1.050</b>		
Criterion value from PA									
% of variance	<b>32.181</b>	<b>14.107</b>	<b>4.510</b>	<b>3.957</b>	<b>3.490</b>	<b>3.490</b>	<b>3.181</b>		
Cumulative %	<b>32.181</b>	<b>46.288</b>	<b>51.545</b>	<b>56.055</b>	<b>60.012</b>	<b>63.502</b>	<b>66.683</b>		

### ***The Results of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis***

A series of hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to investigate how the seven motives distinctively influenced a variety of outcome variables (e.g., eWOM frequency, attitude toward following brands, brand trust, brand satisfaction, intention to pass along a brand's postings, and willingness to buy (see Table 3.10 for detailed results).

***eWOM Frequency.*** The regression model with eWOM frequency as the dependent variable was statistically significant ( $R^2 = .287$ ,  $R_{adj} = .266$ ,  $F(9, 308) = 13.77$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Controlling for gender ( $p > .1$ ) and age ( $p < .001$ ), the results showed that only *Social Interaction* ( $B = .021$ ,  $\beta = .336$ ,  $t(308) = 5.30$ ,  $p < .001$ ) significantly predicted eWOM Frequency, suggesting that as participants had higher social interaction motivation, they were more likely to frequently spread word-of-mouth including leave a comment, repost and send the post. In addition, a motivation for *Entertainment* ( $B = .031$ ,  $\beta = .108$ ,  $t(308) = 1.93$ ,  $p = .054$ ) turned out to be a marginally significant predictor for eWOM Frequency, indicating that participants who have higher entertainment motives tend to spread word-of-mouth more frequently.

***Attitude Toward Following Brands.*** The regression model with attitude toward following brands as the dependent variable was also statistically significant ( $R^2 = .478$ ,  $R_{adj} = .463$ ,  $F(9, 308) = 31.35$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Controlling for gender ( $p < .001$ ) and age ( $p > .1$ ), both brand love ( $B = .092$ ,  $\beta = .494$ ,  $t(308) = 8.77$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and *Brand Admiration* ( $B = .043$ ,  $\beta = .197$ ,  $t(308) = 3.33$ ,  $p < .01$ ) effects were found to be significant. These findings suggest that participants who express love of the brand and admiration for the brand evaluated the brands they followed more favorably.

**Brand Trust.** The regression model with brand trust as the dependent variable was also statistically significant ( $R^2 = .438$ ,  $R_{adj} = .422$ ,  $F(9, 308) = 26.68$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Controlling for gender ( $p > .1$ ) and age ( $p > .1$ ), the results showed that *Brand Love* ( $B = .084$ ,  $\beta = .436$ ,  $t(308) = 7.47$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and *Brand Admiration* ( $B = .045$ ,  $\beta = .199$ ,  $t(308) = 3.24$ ,  $p < .01$ ) significantly influenced brand trust. The results suggest that participants who love or admire brands tend to trust those brands more than other brands. In addition, *Social Interaction* ( $B = .010$ ,  $\beta = .158$ ,  $t(308) = 2.79$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and *Information* ( $B = .043$ ,  $\beta = .113$ ,  $t(308) = 2.27$ ,  $p < .01$ ) were also significant, showing that participants who were more motivated to have social interaction or to obtain information from following brands had higher levels of brand trust.

**Brand Satisfaction.** Similar to other models, the brand satisfaction regression was statistically significant ( $R^2 = .339$ ,  $R_{adj} = .320$ ,  $F(9, 308) = 17.54$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Controlling for gender ( $p < .1$ ) and age ( $p < .05$ ), *Brand Love* ( $B = .059$ ,  $\beta = .308$ ,  $t(308) = 4.87$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and *Brand Admiration* ( $B = .066$ ,  $\beta = .297$ ,  $t(308) = 4.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ) were significant predictors of brand satisfaction. This result suggests that participants were more satisfied the more they loved or admired the brands they followed on Instagram.

**Intention to Pass Along a Brand's Postings.** Similar to other regression models, the regression for intention to pass along a brand's postings was statistically significant ( $R^2 = .429$ ,  $R_{adj} = .413$ ,  $F(9, 308) = 25.75$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Controlling for gender ( $p > .1$ ) and age ( $p < .5$ ), the results showed that the effect of *Social Interaction* ( $B = .054$ ,  $\beta = .558$ ,  $t(308) = 9.83$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and *Affinity for Instagram* ( $B = .043$ ,  $\beta = .144$ ,  $t(308) = 2.51$ ,  $p < .01$ ) were significant. The data showed that as participants had higher levels of social

interaction and affinity for Instagram motives, they were more likely to pass along a brand' postings to other users.

***Willingness to Buy.*** Finally, the regression for willingness to buy was statistically significant as well ( $R^2 = .334$ ,  $R_{adj} = .315$ ,  $F(9, 308) = 17.20$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Controlling for gender ( $p > .1$ ) and age ( $p > .1$ ), the influence of brand love ( $B = .078$ ,  $\beta = .390$ ,  $t(308) = 6.14$ ,  $p < .001$ ), information ( $B = .070$ ,  $\beta = .176$ ,  $t(308) = 3.26$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and decision making ( $B = .046$ ,  $\beta = .116$ ,  $t(308) = 2.07$ ,  $p < .05$ ) on willingness to buy were significant. This suggests that as participants expressed more love for brands, they were more willing to obtain information, and the greater their need to decide or confirm their decisions, the greater their willing to purchase products of brands they followed as advertised on Instagram.

Table 3.14: The Results of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis ( $N = 318$ )

	eWOM		Attitude		Brand trust		Satisfaction		Intention		Willing to buy	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
<b>Control</b>												
Gender	0.12*	0.08	-0.32***	-0.16***	-0.21***	-0.08	-0.22***	-0.10	0.02	-0.06	-0.16**	-0.01
Age	0.15**	0.19***	-0.12*	-0.03	-0.06	0.02	-0.01	0.10*	0.10	0.11*	-0.09	-0.03
<b>Motivation</b>												
Social interaction		0.34***		-0.06		0.16**		0.05		0.56***		0.02
Brand love		0.02		0.49***		0.44***		0.31***		-0.10		0.39***
Affinity for Instagram		0.10		-0.04		-0.10		-0.04		0.14*		-0.06
Brand Admiration		0.04		0.20**		0.20**		0.30***		0.01		0.08
Entertainment		0.11		0.06		0.03		0.04		0.01		-0.04
Decision Making		0.07		-0.08		-0.05		-0.04		-0.00		0.12*
Information		-0.07		0.06		0.11*		0.07		0.07		0.18**
$R^2$	0.04	0.29	0.13	0.48	0.05	0.44	0.05	0.34	0.01	0.43	0.04	0.33
Adjusted $R^2$	0.04	0.27	0.12	0.46	0.04	0.42	0.04	0.32	0.01	0.41	0.03	0.32
$F$	6.88	13.77***	23.35	31.35***	8.36	26.68***	7.74	17.54***	1.89	25.75***	6.05	17.20***
$\Delta F$		15.12**		29.43***		30.35***		19.43***		32.19***		19.67***
$\Delta R^2$		0.25		0.35		0.39		0.29		0.42		0.30

*Note.* All values indicate standardized  $\beta$  value.

\* Statistically significant at .05 level

\*\* Statistically significant at .01 level

\*\*\* Statistically significant at .001 level

### **Summary of findings**

Study 2 addresses consumers' motivations in terms of why they follow a brand's account on Instagram, helping us to understand what specific motives and needs consumers have regarding their use of the Instagram platform. To further investigate the relationship between identified motives and consumer involvement in SNS brand accounts, Study 2 measured involvement outcome variables such as eWOM frequency, attitude toward brand, brand trust, brand satisfaction, pass along intention, and willingness to buy.

Results of Study 2 found that individuals who follow Instagram brand accounts have seven primary social and psychological motives: *Social Interaction*, *Brand Love*, *Affinity for Instagram*, *Brand Admiration*, *Entertainment*, *Decision-Making*, and *Information*. The results further revealed that *Social Interaction* is the strongest factor in motivating brand followers to engage in social relationships with the brand and other brand community members. *Social Interaction* motivation predicted eWOM behaviors and intention to pass along brand messages. The findings of *Brand Love* as second primary motivation indicate that individuals are motivated to follow a specific brand because they have quite favorable feelings when they follow brands. This motivation was found to significantly predict attitude toward following a brand, brand trust, brand satisfaction, and willingness to buy. The *Affinity for Instagram* was found to serve as a strong motive for following brand accounts. That is, brand account followers utilize Instagram to gain advanced benefits, such as quicker, shorter, accurate and exclusive

information, as a result of communicating with brands. *Affinity for Instagram* motivation predicted intention to pass along a brand's postings.

The fourth strongest motivation, the *Brand Admiration* motive, suggests that followers utilize Instagram brand accounts to learn about current trends and fashion. This result suggests this motive plays a significant role in forming positive attitudes toward following brands and brand trust, thereby leading to brand satisfaction. The emergence of *Entertainment* motive indicates that brand followers use brand Instagram accounts to relax and be entertained. Finally, *Decision-Making* and *Information* help brand followers on Instagram to make a buying decision and gain useful information. Both *Decision-Making* and *Information* motivations significantly predicted the likelihood of purchase among brand followers.

## **CHAPTER 4: General Discussion**

Considering the growing use of photo-sharing SNSs and the adoption by brands of these media worldwide, scholars are seeking to understand the dynamics of the linkages between consumers and brands in digital environments (e.g., Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe 2007; Greenwood, Perrin, & Duggan 2016; Mull & Lee 2014). Existing literature explores how consumers and brands utilize SNSs on only a few dimensions in limited settings. In contrast, the research findings presented in this dissertation shed light on an integrated perspective regarding brand relationships with particular attention to the factors that motivate individuals to follow brands accounts on Instagram. As an investigation of how brands and consumers build and maintain relationships in the context of computer-mediated communication, the current research is one of the first to probe into a variety of strategies that brands employ on Instagram relative to consumers' responses to those strategies.

The content analysis conducted in Study 1 determined how brands approach consumers in terms of visual and verbal communication as well as consumers' responses to brand messages. Notably, the overall findings of Study 1 indicated that consumer engagement with brand postings is not always associated with the strategies most frequently used by brand marketers. Specifically, the results revealed that brands relied mostly on Instagram visual messages that feature a studio or outdoor background with a focus on objects-only that exclude product(s). Brands also conveyed mostly product-related verbal information. Third-person pronouns were commonly used in brands' verbal



messages along with nonverbal cues. Brands asked their followers to visit a specific URL with a link in the caption. The findings further suggest that openness and networking are two of the most frequent strategies used to build consumer-brand relationships. The descriptive findings together suggest that the strategies on Instagram employed by brands are similar to some extent across industries.

Considering that SNSs serve as a two-way communication tool between a brand and consumers, it is essential to understand consumer engagement behaviors (i.e., likes, comments) as posted in response to brand messages. The empirical findings of the current study showed that a studio background of a photo is significantly associated with a high number of comments. Because the overall elements in a photo are highlighted when set against a photographically clean background in a neutral color in a studio (Ozonas 2016), this type of photo may attract the attention of followers to leave a comment about a brand or to tag their friends with a comment for sharing the message. However, this approach did not predict a high number of consumer postings of likes. This research further discovered that the most often used context, the object-only context, appears to be a significant predictor of a number of likes and comments. It is possible that consumers may perceive a photo containing only an object as a straightforward interaction with a brand in that the brand conveys a clear and simple message to consumers. In contrast, when a brand message contains a daily life context (i.e., going to a school, working at a company), the second most often used context, brand account followers are likely to express liking but not leave comments. Generally, product-related messages are expected to appear on brand SNS accounts; therefore, those who follow the brand may already feel

a sense of closeness and hold an affinity with the brand when a daily life context is included in a photo. Although account followers may view that context favorably, they may not find it necessary to leave comments.

Interestingly, findings of the current study suggest that brand account followers' likes and comments are negatively influenced by human components of a photo. This may be in line with previous studies on self-displays and social comparisons on SNSs (Mayshak, Sharman, & Zinkiewicz 2017; Rui & Stefanone 2013; Stapleton, Luiz, & Chatwin 2017) that online environments offer an arena where users can manage their self-presentations and compare themselves with others. From that perspective, individuals may be unwilling to engage favorably in brand messages that show pictures of other as models. Another notable finding of the current study is that showing a brand, rather than an actual product, appears to be a significant predictor of the account followers' likes and comments. That is, photos that exhibit a brand logo or name lead individuals to interact more often with brands' posts on Instagram. This may reflect how individuals manifest their interests in a specific brand, rather than in a specific product, which is probably the fundamental reason why they follow that particular brand on Instagram. Only a few brands presented a product package across brands; however, findings showed that packaging photos significantly predicted a high number of likes and comments. It is possible that aesthetic features created by packaging pictures with a variety of colors and shapes attracted the attention of users on Instagram's visually oriented platform.

Perhaps one of the most interesting findings is that information presented in pictures posted on brand accounts had no significant influence on the number of likes and comments. That is, although previous literature (Hartmann, Apaolaza, He, Barrutia, & Echebarria 2017; Nov 2007; Tssai & Men 2014) revealed that information seeking is one of the main motivational factors for consumers' use of SNSs and other online brand pages, the results of the current study indicated that information regarding the product, brand, and promotion do not play a key role in predicting followers' engagement in the brands' postings. From a consumer-brand relationship perspective, this inconsistency may suggest a different analytical approach is needed to better understand what motivates consumers to follow a brand's Instagram account and the interactivity between brand followers and brands posting on Instagram.

Based on the findings of Study 1 that strategies brands frequently use on Instagram do not always lead to consumer engagement, Study 2 was undertaken in an attempt to identify followers' motivations for following brand accounts. Of the seven identified motivations, six (i.e., social interaction, brand love, platform, brand admire, entertainment, decision making) were related to individuals' own interests. Considering this, it can be assumed that intrinsic motivations, in contrast to extrinsic motivations, may serve as stronger factors in prompting individuals to follow brands on Instagram. This finding appears to converge with Study 1's findings that promotion information was not significant in generating likes or comments. In other words, brand account followers on Instagram appear to be motivated to follow particular brands for the sake of their own interests in terms of seeking out relational benefits as opposed to information about the

brand's inherent features in order to gain an advantage of some kind in future incentives (Deci 1971; Deci 1975). Indeed, Bagozzi and Dholakia (2002) observed that consumer engagement results mostly from an individual's intrinsic volitional intention to participate in brand-related activities on social media.

Further, findings of the current study are underscored by the fact that brand followers who reported positive affection for following brands (i.e., brand love, brand admiration) were less likely to take action for the brands, such as engaging in eWOM activities and passing along brand messages. Rather, consumers' reports of affection for brands were positively associated with relationship-related outcomes in terms of attitude toward following the brand, brand trust, and brand satisfaction. Akin to interpersonal relationships, prior studies have described how consumers establish romantic relationships with brands in various ways. For example, one study showed that the length of product ownership had a significant positive impact on users' romantic feelings for the brand (Whang, Allen, Sahoury, & Zhang 2004). Based on that observation, it is possible that brand-related visual components provided through high quality of Instagram photos may lead followers to perceive they own a brand's product and, additionally, have a relationship, thereby increasing their brand trust and satisfaction. In fact, this recommendation converges with Study 1's finding that the use of the image of the brand was significant in generating both likes and comments.

"Brand love," by definition, refers to an emotional and passionate feeling an individual has for a particular trade name (Sternberg 1986; Carroll & Ahuvia 2006). Previous research on consumer-brand relationships has demonstrated that satisfaction is a

prerequisite for the formation of brand love (Carroll & Ahuvia 2006). However, results of the current study suggest an opposite directionality in which “brand love” is the antecedent of brand satisfaction. This may be possible due to an online environment in which individuals are able to search actively and follow brand accounts that are of interest to them. In that sense, brand account followers may already hold romantic feelings about the brand so that brand accounts posted on Instagram provide an arena where brand lovers confirm and even strengthen their relationship with the brand. In the context of the consumer-brand relationship, this finding adds to the empirical evidence of a dyadic interaction between the concept of “brand love” and consumer satisfaction as expressed in digital environments.

## **THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS**

This study provided theoretical support for the Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G) refining and extending it to computer-mediated consumer-brand relationships in Instagram. Most applications of the U&G are used to explain why and how people use certain media, such as Facebook and Twitter. The current research advanced our understanding of SNS users by examining their motivations to follow brand accounts on Instagram.

The overall findings of this research point to the importance of applying social presence theory to understanding consumer behavior in the Instagram context. Social presence theory defines “the degree to which a person is perceived as a real person in mediated communication” (Gunawardena 1995). In addition to that definition, Lowenthal

(2010) posited that social presence can be experienced by the extent to which individuals have emotional connections through interpersonal communication and the extent to which individuals perceive another communicator as being “present,” “there,” or “real.” Previous literature has suggested two constructs of social presence: intimacy and immediacy (Argyle & Dean 1965; Cobb 2009). First, intimacy is influenced by such factors as physical distance, facial expression, emotional expression, and subjects of communication (Argyle & Dean 1965). Although Instagram brand accounts are not physically present, intimacy between brand followers and the brands they follow may be enhanced through what brands present on Instagram, such as frequent usage of emoticons for emotional expression and tagging of location and person for reducing distance. Immediacy can be defined as the extent to which an individual perceives psychological distance between him/herself and the object of communication (Cobb 2009). In that regard, brand account followers’ intrinsic motivations may reduce the psychological distance that they perceive between themselves and the brand they are following. Moreover, high quality visual postings on Instagram may influence followers to assume “this brand is there.” Since social presence is a crucial factor of satisfaction in computer-mediated communication, the findings of this research combined with social presence theory may provide a broader perspective on consumer-brand relationships on Instagram.

## **MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The current study provides brand managers with deeper insights into the management of brand accounts in order to increase understanding about what motivates

brand followers, leading to behavioral and brand-related outcomes. The findings of Study 1 demonstrate the discrepancies between brand expectations and consumer responses in social media marketing. These findings provide practical guidance on how to tap into the brand potential of marketing communication tools, such as Instagram. As a social media platform, Instagram is a relative newcomer to which marketers are paying close attention for marketing purposes (Ashley and Tuten 2015). Conventional wisdom holds that Instagram is mostly used by individuals for self-promotion and social networking with friends as documented by Hu, Manikonda, and Kambhampati (2014). From the managerial perspective, brand accounts posted on Instagram are considered and used mostly for purposes of promoting a brand and networking with brand consumers. One of the major advantages of adopting SNSs as a marketing tool is cost efficiency; however, the current study suggests that marketers may be spending money to create messages to increase consumer engagement that fail to meet consumer's expectations within an online social media environment. Therefore, the current study's analysis of the results of global brand messages will provide a better way to increase consumer engagement.

Key to understanding literature on advertising and marketing in the new media environment is that a new social movement has emerged that revolves around a SNS platform, namely, Instagram where marketers and individuals alike post photographs that are far more emotionally charged than a paragraph of text. As the leading platform in this field, Instagram is able to capture and share real photos and videos that evoke human emotion in real time. Rosa (2017) convincingly noted that when influencers use SNSs, especially Instagram, to promote a cause, it could be picked up outside of social media

and become part of everyday conversations and real life actions. The state of peer-to-peer fundraising research demonstrated that social media played a role in 35% of donations and, more importantly, 21% of peer-to-peer fundraising dollars are raised directly from social media appeals (2017). By taking cues from findings of the current study, organizations involved with social movement activities through use of social media may discover new ways to manage their messages in terms of understanding how social movements develop and maintain online social communities.

The followings are general guidelines for marketing and advertising managers who want to use Instagram for as one of their marketing tools. First, managers should focus more on the brand (e.g., brand logo and name) rather than the product image when they create Instagram messages. Based on the results from Study 1, even though the actual product was used more often than the brand (e.g., brand logo and name), consumers were not likely to like or leave a comment on the product-related postings. However, brand features including pictures of package encouraged consumer engagement. Those findings are in line with findings from Study 2 that suggested that most of brand followers were motivated by pursuing their personal interests rather than by gaining incentives. Second, when managers link with other brands or persons in their postings, it would better for them to use a photo rather than a caption. Whereas links in captions, which were included in all brand postings, negatively impacted consumers' engagement, linkages of a brand/person appearing in photos positively influenced consumer engagement. Third, in the use of photos, managers are should reduce the



number of photos in the context of daily life or that have objects only or human features or information regarding social responsibility.

## **LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Although the findings of this research are exploratory in nature with several unexpected results, there are several limitations that should be considered when interpreting and applying the findings. First, this research analyzed only pictures and captions of messages posted by global brand accounts, focusing on how global brands were using photographs and messages posted on Instagram. Recently, many video messages have been widely used, an indication of the speed of evolution taking place in social media environments. An example of additional changes are captured in the observation that currently three types of video messages are available: videos that remain permanently unless deleted by the user, stories that disappear 24 hours after publication, and live streaming that allows users to share video content in the moment and exists only while streaming (Mediakix Team 2017). Even though research has revealed that photo messages generate 36% more engagement than video messages (Mediakix Team 2017), an analysis of specific strategies used in video brand messages is needed, including how those strategies influence consumer engagement.

A second limitation of the current study that readers should keep in mind is that no distinction of differences was made between characteristics of industry segments, although by including global brands across a wide range of fields, this study nevertheless found meaningful discoveries. For example, food and beauty brands have different traits

than consumer goods so that the preferred social media messages are likely to differ. Because those two brand categories fall into FMCG industry segment, future research should focus on specific brands in each of the two industries.

Additionally, a third limitation of the current research is that even though findings of Study 1 demonstrated that in many ways global brands have not used Instagram messages to optimum effectiveness, it is difficult to determine the causal relationship. That is, why do some of the strategies not enhance consumer engagement? Even though Instagram is well known for as a photo- or video-sharing application, consumer engagement may vary depending on how photos and captions are combined. Especially, considering that this study identified that most messages used captions to convey an emotional expression or to provide extra explanation, captions may carry greater influence than marketers expect. A sentiment analysis was not conducted as part of the current study to identify influences on consumer engagement that occurs as the result of captions. Sentiment analysis involves detecting whether a text expresses a positive, a negative, or a neutral sentiment and whether the text is general or about a specific topic (e.g., a person, a product, or an event) (Rosenthal, Farra, & Nakov 2017). As a result, sentiment in text that is associated with a photo may have a great impact on consumer engagement.

Future research could examine whether cultural differences have an influence on consumer motivations for following brands on Instagram and ways of establishing consumer-brand relationships. The role of culture in communication has been frequently studied through the comparison of two types cultural characteristics, individualism and

collectivism (Aaker & Maheswaran 1997; Hofstede 1980; Kim, Sohn & Choi 2011). According to Triandis (1995), individualism is defined as a social pattern that consists of individuals who see themselves as autonomous and independent while collectivism is defined as a social pattern that consists of individuals who see themselves as a part of collectives such as family, community, and group (Triandis 1995). Culture is also considered as an important dimension in understanding motivation (MacInnis, Park, & Priester 2014) because motives are derived from the internalization of cultural values (Becker 2012). This means that an individual's prevailing self-construal is primarily determined by the cultural contexts of individualism and collectivism (Markus & Kitayama 1991). Therefore, a brand may aim at different points depending on targeted cultures. Moreover, the way of developing and managing social relationships is also manifested differently between individualistic and collectivistic cultures. In an individualistic culture, people tend to be satisfied with fragmented and short-term relationships with others because they are without underlying interdependencies (de Mooij 1998; Parks & Floyd 1996). In contrast, a collectivistic culture highlights attaching value to group identity such as family, community, and group with a strong tendency to build long-term relationships (de Mooij 1998; Parks & Floyd 1996). Therefore, collectivists are more likely than individualists not only to seek situations that produce harmonious interpersonal atmospheres but also value good social relationships and in-group harmony (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey 1988). This cultural difference in building and managing social relationships may also extend to how individuals perceive and use social media.

Another interesting avenue for further research is examining the role of SNS as a managerial tool to implement relationship-related strategies. The results from Study 1 demonstrated negative or no influences of relationship strategies on Instagram. Given the growing importance of SNSs to brands, follow-up questions may involve the circumstances under which these relationship strategies could be effective in order to lead to long-term consumer-brand relationships. In other words, it may be fruitful for future research in this area to investigate the ultimate combinations of the types of photos, industries, and consumers that are likely to enhance the relationships through brand postings.

Other findings of this research point to new topics related how brands follow other accounts. Brand studies vary widely in terms of the number of accounts that they follow. For example, Louis Vuitton follows 5 Instagram accounts while Starbucks follows 1,871 Instagram accounts. Why do brands follow other accounts, and what are the objectives that they are trying to achieve when they follow another account?

In summary, the findings of this research demonstrate the need for communication strategies that focus on outcomes that result in consumer engagement and meet their motivational reasons for interacting with a brand on the Instagram platform. This study provides useful groundwork for understanding associations between brand message strategies, consumer engagement, consumer motivations, and relational outcomes in social media environments. Hence, the findings of this study advance our managerial and theoretical understanding of building and maintaining consumer-brand relationships between brand account followers and brands. Further findings along this

line of research will contribute to existing knowledge in the field of relational marketing and consumer psychology and provide valuable advertising and marketing insights and effective guidance for strategic consumer-brand relationship development.

## Appendix A: Coding Book for Brand level

### Brand's communication strategies on Instagram

Date of coding: \_\_\_\_\_

Brand ID: \_\_\_\_\_

#### ***A. Brand Types:***

1. **Brand Name:**

2. **Country of Origin**

1) Canada	2) China	3) Denmark	4) France	5) Germany
6) Italy	7) Japan	8) Mexico	9) Netherlands	10) South Korea
11) Spain	12) Sweden	13) Switzerland	14) United Kingdom	15) United States

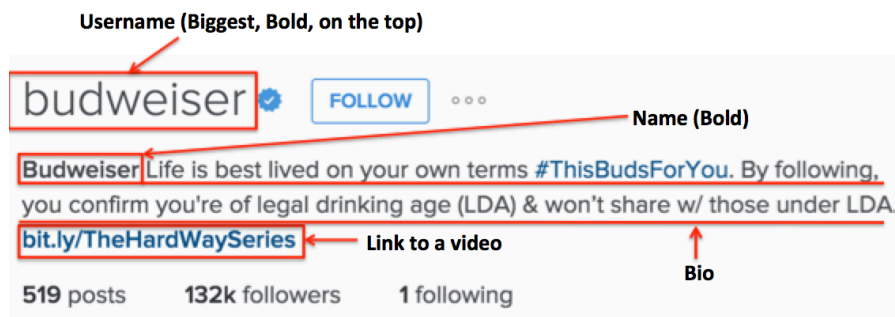
3. **Industry type:**

1) Alcohol	2) Apparel	3) Automotive	4) Beverages	5) Business Services
6) Diversified	7) Electronics	8) Energy	9) FMCG	10) Financial Services
11) Luxury	12) Media	13) Restaurants	14) Retail	15) Sporting Goods
16) Technology	17) Transportation			

4. **Video Postings (How many video postings are there among recent 50 postings):**

#### ***B. Brands' Account Profile:***

e.g., web view of Instagram



5. **Username:** \_\_\_\_\_

6. Very first date of posting: \_\_\_\_\_ week(s) ago

7. Very recent date of posting: \_\_\_\_\_ day(s) ago

8. Number of posts: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Number of followers: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Number of following: \_\_\_\_\_

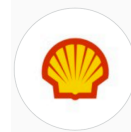
11. Profile picture:

1) Brand Logo	2) Brand Logo without Name	3) Product only
4) Both Product & Brand cue(s)	5) Other (please specify)	

e.g., 1) Brand Logo



2) BL without name



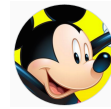
3) Product only



4) Both



5) Character



12. Name of the account:

1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
-------------------------	-------

13. Bio:

1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
-------------------------	-------

13.1 Personal Pronouns

1) Yes

0) No

If yes, please answer 13.1-1~3. If no, please go to 13.2

13.1-1	First-person (e.g., "I," "my," "me," "myself," "we," "us," "our")	1) Yes	0) No
13.1-2	Second-person (e.g., "you," "yours," "yourself")	1) Yes	0) No
13.1-3	Third-person (e.g., "she/he," "him/her," "they," "them," "their," "it")	1) Yes	0) No

13.2 Use of nonverbal cues

13.2-1	Emoticons	1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
13.2-2	Abbreviations	1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
13.2-3	Repeated punctuation	1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
13.2-4	Intentional misspelling	1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
13.2-5	Other (please specify)		

**13.3 Any Hashtag(s) is(are) included in Bio?**

1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
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**14. Website**

1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
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**15. Additional link to a video/specific webpage**

1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
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**16. Object of the account** (perceived feeling by your observation)

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## Appendix B: Coding Book for Posting Level

### Brand's communication strategies on Instagram

Coders' No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of coding: \_\_\_\_\_

Brand ID: \_\_\_\_\_

#### ***C. Posting in General***

17. Posting ID (1-20 for each brand followed by brand ID): \_\_\_\_\_

18. Posting date: \_\_\_\_\_ week(s) ago

19. Number of likes: \_\_\_\_\_

20. Number of comments: \_\_\_\_\_

21. Location added (=Location tag)?

1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
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22. Linked to other SNS?

1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
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#### ***D. Overall Image***

23. Color

1) Color	2) Black & White	3) Other (please specify)
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24. Filter

1) Yes (uncertain=Yes)	0) No
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25. Tagging on Image?

9.1	Brand	1) Yes	0) No
9.2	Person	1) Yes	0) No

#### ***E. Background of the Image***

26. Background Location of the picture is taken

1) Outdoor Public (e.g., forest, desert, park, etc.)
2) Outdoor Private (e.g., patio, backyard, etc.)
3) Indoor Public (e.g., café, bar, in a train, in a bus, etc.)
4) Indoor Private (e.g., living room, in a car, etc.)
5) Cannot define (e.g., studio)

#### ***F. Contents of the Image***

27. Contexts of the picture (i.e., The brand is shown in \_\_\_\_\_ contexts.)

1) Yes

0) No

11.1 Daily life (e.g., school,	11.2 Party/gathering (e.g., club,	11.3 Leisure activity/recreation
--------------------------------	-----------------------------------	----------------------------------

company)	birthday)	
<b>11.4</b> Entertainment (e.g., movie, exhibition)	<b>11.5</b> Travel	<b>11.6</b> Driving
<b>11.7</b> Fashion (e.g., apparel, styling)	<b>11.8</b> Beauty (e.g., nail, hair, skincare, makeup)	<b>11.9</b> Fitness
<b>11.10</b> Foods	<b>11.11</b> Cooking	<b>11.12</b> Drinking
<b>11.13</b> Friendship	<b>11.14</b> Family	<b>11.15</b> Object only (Object doesn't need to be the Brand's one)
<b>11.16</b> Other (please specify)		

**28. Components of the picture** (What is showing on the picture?)

<b>12.1</b>	<b>Human</b> (including any part of body)	1) Yes	0) No
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**12.1-1 If 12.1) human (including any part of body) is included in the picture, is the person celebrity Endorser (s)?**

1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
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<b>12.2</b>	<b>Brand</b> (e.g., logo, brand name)	1) Yes	0) No
<b>12.3</b>	<b>Actual product of the Brand</b>	1) Yes	0) No
<b>12.4</b>	<b>Package</b>	1) Yes	0) No

\*12.2 Actual product of the Brand includes products that sell from the brand (e.g., waffle or Swedish foods in IKEA, McCafe from McDonald)

**12.4-1 Brand/Product Placement** (Brand and product include only the brand you are coding or products that are from the brand your are coding)

1) Center	2) On the side (Top/Bottom or left/right)
3) Full of image	4) As a background

**12.4-2 Brand/Product Personification in Image (Human or humanized representative)**

1) Anthropomorphism-Human character	2) Zoomorphism-Humanized animal
3) Teramorphism-Humanized spiritual	0) Not applicable

\*Anthropomorphism (Human character): anthropomorphism is the personification type that the brand is embodied with human name and characteristics, e.g., Marlboro Man)

\*Zoomorphism (Humanized animal): zoomorphism refers to the use of animal to stand for the brand, e.g., Tony the Tiger for Kellogg)

\* Teramorphism (Humanized spiritual): teramorphism is derived from tetralogy where a spiritual creature is humanized and acts on behalf of the brand, e.g., M&M's)

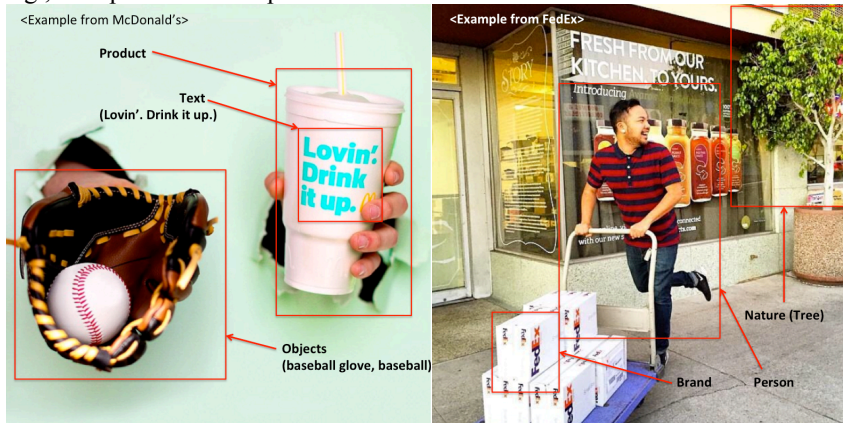
**12.4-3~6 1) Human / 2) Brand / 3) Actual Product of the Brand and 4) Package of the Brand are included in the picture, please answer below: (If no, go to 12.5)**

<b>12.4-3</b>	<b>Body portion</b>	1) Any part of the body (e.g., hand, fingers, etc.)	2) At least half of the body	3) Whole body (front or back)
<b>12.4-4</b>	<b>Face</b>	1) Yes	0) No	
<b>12.4-5</b>	<b>Noticeability</b> (clearly focused)	1) Yes	0) No	

12.4-6	<b>Connection to the brand</b>	1) Touching	0) No attached	
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12.5	<b>Object(s) exclude Brand's Product</b> (please specify)	1) Yes	0) No
12.6	<b>Advertisement</b>	1) Yes	0) No
12.7	<b>Non-Human Animal</b> (e.g., non animated dog, cat, etc.)	1) Yes	0) No
12.8	<b>Nature</b> (e.g., tree, flower, river, etc.)	1) Yes	0) No
12.9	<b>Text</b> (please specify)	1) Yes	0) No

e.g., Components of the picture



## G. Caption

### 13 Presence of Caption

1) Yes (please copy & paste all)	0) No
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### 14 Brand/Product mentioned in Caption (Brand and product include only the brand your are coding or products that are from the brand your are coding)

1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
-------------------------	-------

### 15 Personal Pronouns 1) Yes 0) No

15.1	<b>First-person</b> (e.g., "I," "my," "me," "myself," "we," "us," "our")	1) Yes	0) No
15.2	<b>Second-person</b> (e.g., "you," "yours," "yourself")	1) Yes	0) No
15.3	<b>Third-person</b> (e.g., "she/he," "him/her," "they," "them," "their," "it")	1) Yes	0) No

### 16 Verbs in the imperative form: 1) Yes 0) No

\*It is used to express direct command or requests. These commands or requests tell the audience to act a certain way

e.g., "Respond this tweet" "Click the link in our bio for supplies"

### 16-1~13. What is the action to take (select all that apply)? 1) Yes 0) No

16.1 Call a 800 number	16.2 Use/purchase	16.3 Visit/check out the URL
16.4 Email/send a (direct) message	16.5 Comments (e.g., why would you order wings without	16.6 Share/Repost

	Budweiser?)	
<b>16.7</b> Sign up	<b>16.8</b> Follow	<b>16.9</b> Participating a promotion
<b>16.10</b> Be a fan on other Social media	<b>16.11</b> Enjoy	<b>16.12</b> Other (please specify)

**16-14. Caption for Promotion?**

1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
-------------------------	-------

**17 Relationship-maintenance strategies**

**17.1 Positivity:** any attempt to enable ease of using Instagram and to make users satisfied and enjoyable. Indicators include URLS, multi-media features and events such as contests and festivals.

1) URL	2) Link to other SNS
3) Link to a particular event web page	4) other (please specify)
0) No	

**17.2 Openness:** brand information, product information and a link to the official website.

1) Link to the brand's official website	2) Brand behind story
3) Product behind story	4) Employee story
5) other (please specify)	0) No

**17.3 Networking:** any effort of the brand to build network with consumers, both current and future.

1) Reposting	2) Sponsorships
3) Event	4) Affiliations/Social groups
5) Media Relations	6) other (please specify)
0) No	

**17.4 Shared Tasks:** social responsibility initiatives containing the legal, ethical, community, and environment

1) Economic	2) Legal
3) Ethical	4) Environmental social issues/philanthropic
5) other (please specify)	0) No

**18 Information types (Select all that apply) 1) Yes**

0) No

<b>18.1 Information</b> (e.g., price/value, quality, performance/malfunction, components/contents, availability (product/store, nutrition, etc.)	<b>18.2 Entertainment</b> (e.g., party, etc.)
<b>18.3 Promotion/event</b> (e.g., special offers, coupons, etc.)	<b>18.4 Announcement</b> (e.g., jobs/career-related, new ideas, etc.)
<b>18.5 Research</b> (e.g., independent research/ranks, sponsored research, etc.)	<b>18.6 Social Responsibility</b> (e.g., socially responsible events, etc.)

**18.3-1. If the information includes 18.3) Promotion/event, what is it? (If no, go to 19)**

1) Coupons	2) Deals	3) Contests / sweepstakes	4) Samples
5) Loyalty programs	6) Rebates	7) Free giveaways	8) Other (Please specify)

**19 Message strategy (Select all that apply) 1) Yes****0) No**

<b>19.1</b> Ego	<b>19.2</b> Social	<b>19.3</b> Sensory
<b>19.4</b> Routine	<b>19.5</b> Acute need	<b>19.6</b> Rational appeal
<b>19.7</b> Not applicable		

\*Ego: Use little factual information. Focuses on self and uses appeal to the image of vanity, self-actualization, and emotional aspect of brand. E.g., “bold coffee lovers, this is for you”

\*Social: Values on others’ (thoughts, opinions, evaluations, etc.), address to others, and show social situation motivating consumers. E.g., “share it with friends.” “Come early 4 the family track walks event!”

\*Sensory: Emphasize five senses and pleasurable moments. E.g., ‘Yum/Feel the speed’ “You have great taste!”

\*Routine: Focus on habitual purchase usually consumers don’t need deliberation). Use a cue or a reminder (brand name and package emphasized), and appeals to convenience and trivial interests. E.g., “Coca-Cola is always a great pick-me-up!”

\*Acute need: information provided, but consumers have limited time to make decision. Use a urgent situation requiring immediate action. E.g., “Coupon expires 10/10”

\*Rational appeal: Provide information, which persuade consumers to make a purchase decision. Explanation of product, how to solve the problem, and emphasize the differences or competitive advantages. E.g., “Get a low-cost, nutritional, healthy dinner!”

**20 Use of nonverbal cues:**

<b>20.1</b>	<b>Emoticons</b>	1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
<b>20.2</b>	<b>Abbreviations</b>	1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
<b>20.3</b>	<b>Repeated punctuation</b>	1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
<b>20.4</b>	<b>Intentional misspelling</b>	1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
<b>20.5</b>	<b>Other</b>	1) Yes (please specify)	0) No

\*Emoticons: e.g., :- ) or ☺ ^^

\*Abbreviation: e.g., “LOL (lol)” for laugh out loud, “omg” for oh my god, “thnx” for thanks, w/ for with, “LMK” for let me know, “ur” for your, “ttyl” for talk to you later

\*Repeated punctuation: e.g., “Woo hoo Friday!!!!!!” “hmm.....” “Wow~~~~”

\*Intentional misspelling: e.g., “I’m soooooo happy” “Thiiiiiiiiis much” “Wowwwwww”

**21 Mentioning other person/brand’s account in caption (e.g., @Budweiser)**

<b>21.1</b>	<b>Person</b>	1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
<b>21.2</b>	<b>Brand</b>	1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
<b>31.3</b>	<b>Brand Event/ Promotion/Campaign</b>	1) Yes (please specify)	0) No

**22 Does brand treat readers in any of the following ways?**

<b>22.1</b>	<b>Intimate</b> (e.g., Family & Friend)	1) Yes	0) No
<b>22.2</b>	<b>Fan/Brand Community member</b>	1) Yes	0) No
<b>22.3</b>	<b>General Consumer</b>	1) Yes	0) No

**H. Hashtag****23 Presence of hashtag(s):**

1) Yes (please copy & paste all)	0) No
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**24 Number of hashtag(s): \_\_\_\_\_****25 Types of hashtag(s)**

<b>25.1</b>	<b>Brand specific</b> (i.e., brand name)	1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
<b>25.2</b>	<b>Brand-Intended Hashtag</b> (i.e., made by brand e.g., #ThisBudsForYou)	1) Yes (please specify)	0) No

<b>25.3</b>	<b>General Hashtag</b> (product category e.g., #coffee, #jeans, #beer, etc.)	1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
<b>25.4</b>	<b>Trending</b> (e.g., #ootd, #whereistand, etc.)	1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
<b>25.5</b>	<b>Explicit emotion-related</b> (e.g., #comfortable, #lovely, etc.)	1) Yes (please specify)	0) No
<b>25.6</b>	<b>Not brand-related</b> (e.g., location, market)	1) Yes (please specify)	0) No

**26 Purpose of the posting** (perceived feeling from your observation, overall impression, key takeaway e.g., attention, announcing, encouraging participation, etc.)

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## Appendix C: Survey Questionnaire

### Following Brands on Instagram

1. How long have you been using Instagram? \_\_\_\_\_ month(s)

2. On average, how often do you check Instagram?

1) Rarely	2) Less than once a month	3) A few times a month
4) Once a week	5) A few times a week (please specify _____)	6) Once a day
7) Several times a day		

3. On average, how often do you upload pictures on Instagram?

1) Never uploaded anything	2) Rarely	3) Less than once a month
4) A few times a month	5) Once a week	6) A few times a week
7) Once a day	8) Several times a day	

4. How many pictures do you have on your Instagram account?  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. How many “followers” do you have? \_\_\_\_\_  
follower(s)

6. How many “followings” do you have?  
\_\_\_\_\_ following(s)

7. Are your photos private?

1) Yes	2) No
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The questions below are related to the brands that you are following on Instagram. Please recall brands that you are following on Instagram.

8. How many brands are you following on Instagram?  
\_\_\_\_\_brand(s)
9. Of the brands that you listed as ones that you follow in Question 8, how many brands do you actually use or own? \_\_\_\_\_ brand(s)
10. Considering the brands that you follow, how often do you visit those brands on Instagram?

1) Rarely	2) Less than once a month	3) A few times a month
4) Once a week	5) A few times a week	6) Once a day
7) Several times a day		

11. Why do you follow a brand's account on Instagram? Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the reasons below (1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree)

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
To get information in advance (e.g., new product)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To share information/my ideas with others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To decide what to buy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To make sure that I've made the correct decision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To be entertained	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To relax	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To pass time when I am bored	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To get incentives (e.g., coupons, cyber money, promotional deals, free samples, member exclusive events, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To get information that I can't get elsewhere (e.g., clip showing a process of making the brand's product, story behind the brand, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because I like the brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because I love the brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because this brand means a lot to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To remember special events	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because I am interested in this brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To learn more about the brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because I can use Instagram anytime, anywhere (Convenience)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



To solve a problem by talking with brand managers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because Instagram is connected with other SNS (e.g., Facebook)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To see how the brand interacts with consumers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because I just like the brand's photos (i.e., high quality, cool, funny)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because the brand is related to my professional life (e.g., current/future job)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To use the brand as reference for fashion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because the brand is so popular	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because the brand is what I use regularly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because Instagram is quicker and shorter than other SNSs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because Instagram is the only way to get information about the brand (i.e., local brands)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because Instagram is more accurate than other SNSs because it has photos	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To learn about myself	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To learn about others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To be identified with a brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To impress other people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To have something to do with others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because I wonder what other people have said	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To show others what I like	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To give my opinion about the brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To express my support for the values represented by the brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because I just want to keep up with what is going on	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because the brand is closely related to my daily life (e.g., related to my workplace or school)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because I plan to buy the brand in the future	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because the brand encourages my faith	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because I am interest from seeing photos (e.g., make-up, nail, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To get to know others in a brand community	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To build a close relationship with a brand's community members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To feel accepted and approved of in the brand community (e.g., affiliation)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To help other brand community members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To get help from other brand community members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

To gain social status or social position among others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To feel pleasure from following a brand account	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because the brand asked me to follow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

\*References: Dholakia, Bagozzi, & Pearo (2004), Gwinner, Gremler, & Bitner (1998), Ouwersloot & Odekerken-Scroder (2008), Sheldon & Bryant (2016), Sukoco & Wu (2010), Sung, Kim, Kwon, & Moon (2010), DDB & Opinionway (2010)

### Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM)

12. How often do you ‘**Like**’ a brand’s posting on Instagram?

1) Rarely	2) Less than once a month	3) A few times a month
4) Once a week	5) A few times a week	6) Once a day
7) Several times a day		

13. How often do you leave a **comment** about a brand’s posting on Instagram?

1) Rarely	2) Less than once a month	3) A few times a month
4) Once a week	5) A few times a week	6) Once a day
7) Several times a day		

14. How often do you ‘**repost**’ a brand’s posting on Instagram?

1) Rarely	2) Less than once a month	3) A few times a month
4) Once a week	5) A few times a week	6) Once a day
7) Several times a day		

15. How often do you use ‘**send to**’ to forward a brand’s posting to your friends on Instagram?

1) Rarely	2) Less than once a month	3) A few times a month
4) Once a week	5) A few times a week	6) Once a day
7) Several times a day		

### **Persuasiveness (Petty and Cacioppo 1979)**

16. Please recall the postings by the brands that you are following on Instagram. How did you feel about the postings?

Good*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Bad
Unfavorable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Favorable
Disagreeable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Agreeable

### **Attitude toward following brand (Lee and Aaker, 2004)**

17. What do you think about the brands that you are following on Instagram? Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements below (1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree)

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
To me, the brands that I am following on Instagram are positive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To me, the brands that I am following on Instagram are good.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To me, the brands that I am following on Instagram are favorable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### **Brand Trust (He, Li and Harris 2012)**

He, H., Li, Y., & Harris, L. (2012). Social identity perspective on brand loyalty. *Journal of Business Research*, 65, 648–657.

18. What do you think about the brands that you are following on Instagram? Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements below (1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree)

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
I trust this brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I rely on this brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This is an honest brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This brand is safe.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Brand Satisfaction (Aaker, Fournier, & Brasel, 2004)**

19. What do you think about the brands that you are following on Instagram? Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements below (1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree)

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
I am completely satisfied with the brands that I am following on Instagram.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am completely pleased with the brands that I am following on Instagram.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Following brands on Instagram is turning out better than I expected.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Intention to pass along brand's postings (Ajzen 2002; 2006; Ajzen and Fishbein 1980)**

20. Considering the postings on the brands' Instagram accounts that you follow, please indicate what extent do you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
I plan to pass along the brand's postings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I will make an effort to pass along the brand's postings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I intend to pass along the brand's postings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Willingness to buy (Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal 1991)**

21. Considering the postings on the brands' Instagram accounts that you follow, please indicate what extent do you agree with the following statement.

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
Compared to the brands that I am NOT following on Instagram, the likelihood of purchasing products from the brands that I am following on Instagram is higher.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If I were in the market, I would consider buying products from the brands that I am following on Instagram.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Based on the information that is given on the Instagram accounts of the brands that I am following, I would consider buying the products from the brands that I follow on Instagram.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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